

DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD:
CORRESPONDENCE AND SELECT DOCUMENTS



DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD

DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD: CORRESPONDENCE AND SELECT DOCUMENTS

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VALMIKI CHOUDHARY**



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FOREWORD

Rising from the historic soil of Magadh, Dr. Rajendra Prasad became one of the front-rank leaders of the Independence Movement. He will be remembered as the President of the golden jubilee session of the Indian National Congress, as a statesman who presided over the labours of the Constituent Assembly in drafting a constitution that has served India well, and as the first President of our Republic. The people have grateful memories of his selfless dedication.

The publication of Dr. Rajendra Prasad's correspondence and documents, covering the period 1934-1948, will be an important aid to the understanding of our recent history. The growing literature on our freedom struggle will be the richer for this series. I hope that the papers will stimulate research in one of the most formative periods of contemporary world history. They should also lead us to reflect on what we are capable of doing to advance the cause that we hold dear, a life of fulfilment for the deprived and downtrodden millions.

INDIRA GANDHI

New Delhi
November 10, 1983

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was one of the most distinguished leaders of the Indian National Movement. Born on 3 December 1884 at village Ziradei in Siwan district of Bihar, he died on 28 February 1963 in Patna.

Rajendra Babu completed his education in the year 1910, securing the highest degree in Law from Calcutta University. He always stood first in his academic career. For a time he worked as a Professor in City College, Calcutta University, and then in G.B.B. College, Muzaffarpur, Bihar. He practised as an advocate at Calcutta High Court from 1911 to 1915. In 1916, when Patna High Court was established, he left Calcutta and joined the Patna Bar.

It was in 1917 that Mahatma Gandhi contacted Rajendra Babu in Patna to help him in his mission in Champaran.

At the call of Mahatma Gandhi, thousands of men and women from different walks of life joined the national movement, actively participated in it and associated themselves with various political and constructive programmes launched by him from time to time. Rajendra Babu, along with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, will be remembered as one of the foremost exponents of the ideals and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

During the freedom movement, Rajendra Babu was elected Congress President three times. He became President of the Constituent Assembly in 1946 and the first President of the Indian Republic in 1950 and continued in that position till 13 May 1962.

His birth centenary falls in 1984. With a view to commemorating the event, it has been decided to publish his unpublished correspondence so that his role in the freedom movement becomes better known.

The correspondence covers the period from 1934—when he first became Congress President—to 1948. The whole correspondence will be published in six volumes. This will be a fitting tribute to Rajendra Babu on the occasion of his birth centenary.

For convenience of reference, the correspondence has been arranged in two parts: Part I includes letters written by or written to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, while Part II includes letters exchanged between others, copies of which were sent to him for information and action. Other miscellaneous documents have been given in the Appendices.

Among Dr. Rajendra Prasad's correspondents are distinguished and eminent contemporaries such as Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Subhas Chandra Bose, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, C. Rajagopalachari, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and C.F. Andrews, to mention only a

few. The importance of the correspondence will be self-evident to the reader. Through the correspondence one could see the panorama of India's struggle for freedom. Much of the correspondence of many distinguished leaders and colleagues of Dr. Prasad have since been published. With the publication of this correspondence, the history of the period could be studied in greater detail. It will certainly throw new light on men and events of the time.

The volumes can truly be considered a source material for the study of the history of our national movement. The correspondence reflects the change from colonialism to freedom. The country saw a peculiar revolution under the leadership of Gandhiji. Gandhiji knew to whom to entrust the leadership of the movement and at what time. He also knew how to attain swaraj and whom to give the responsibility of administering the country.

Many historians have written the history of the country during British rule. Our history has been suppressed, twisted or distorted to please the British rulers. Dr. Rajendra Prasad drew the attention of historians to the fact that what had been written as history till then and was being taught in schools and colleges lacked authenticity. Besides, the achievements of our ancestors had not been brought to light. Our national movement had no place in it. Therefore, scholars must pay attention to facts and should write authentic history.

A lively picture of the period is depicted in the first volume which starts from late 1934. The 1935 Act was the beginning of our democracy. The British had realised that they could no longer deny the elected representatives of the people the right of being associated with the administration of the country in howsoever small a measure. The strength of the national movement forced them to think that way. Gandhiji's achievements, through truth and non-violence, were evident in the events that were taking place.

For the first time elections were held in the Provinces under the 1935 Act. The Congress got majority in eight Provinces and for the first time Congress ministries were formed in those Provinces. The ministers were the same people who at one time or other had been put in jail by the British rulers for their role in the national movement. The Provinces where the Congress formed ministries were: Assam, Bihar, Orissa, the U.P., the C.P. and Berar, Bombay, Madras, and the North-West Frontier Province. In other Provinces also the elected representatives formed ministries. One-third of the country at the time was under the Princes, and there the 1935 Act did not apply. After Rajendra Babu became Congress President in 1934, he established Praja Mandals in the Princely States to organise the people to fight for their democratic right to be associated with the administration.

This volume reveals how democratically elected representatives were guided by the Congress leadership to be responsible to the electorate and also run the administration in a disciplined way. This was in fact the beginning of our democracy in every sense. The method of selecting the true representatives of the people on the basis of character, ability and service to the country was laid down. The task of selecting such candidates was entrusted to the Parliamentary

Board consisting of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. The Board also saw to it that the ministries in the Congress Provinces worked honestly and efficiently, striking a balance between their loyalty to the people and their responsibility to the Legislatures.

These volumes have been prepared under the auspices of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Vichar Sansthan, Patna. The Sansthan has been set up to perpetuate the memory of Rajendra Babu. And the publication of his works is the first step in this direction.

When I met President Giani Zail Singh and explained to him the objectives of the Sansthan and the forthcoming birth centenary of Rajendra Babu, he appreciated our efforts. He also expressed deep regards for him and assured us of every possible help. For this, the Sansthan including myself will be ever grateful to him.

I am, indeed, indebted to Shrimati Indira Gandhi, our respected leader and Prime Minister, for having found time, out of her ever busy schedule, to write a foreword in response to my request.

I am particularly thankful to my learned friend Dr. Hari Dev Sharma, Head, Research & Publications, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, without whose timely and generous support, guidance and advice, this work would never have seen the light of day.

I received valuable advice from Dr. (Mrs.) Kapila Vatsyayan, eminent scholar and Additional Secretary in the Department of Culture, Government of India, for which I am thankful to her. My search for a good publisher brought me in contact with Shri B.R. Bowry, Publications Adviser to Messrs. Allied Publishers. I am thankful to him and Messrs. Allied Publishers for readily agreeing to undertake publication of the volumes.

The Governor of Bihar, Shri A.R. Kidwai, gave me great encouragement and I am most grateful to him. By taking keen interest and extending the necessary support and help to the project, Dr. Jagannath Mishra and Shri Chandra Sekhar Singh, the former and the present Chief Ministers respectively of Bihar, have shown their genuine respect and regard for Rajendra Babu. I express my grateful thanks to them. I would also like to express my thanks for the encouragement and guidance I have received from Shri P.V. Narasimharao, Shri P.C. Sethi, Shri H.K.L. Bhagat, Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha, and Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad, all of them Ministers in the Central Government, and to Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Smt. Rajendra Kumari Vajpayee, Shri Hari Krishna Shastri, Shri D.C. Jha and Smt. Usha Ahuja of New Delhi, Shri Prabhu Dayal Himmatsinghka, Calcutta, Shri B.L. Sharma, Shri R.K. Sharma and Shri Maheshwar Mishra—all of Patna, and Shri Ishwari Prasad, Secretary, Department of Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India.

My thanks are due to the management of the Sinha Library and the *Searchlight*, both of Patna, and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi.

Last, but not the least, I am greatly indebted to my wife, Smt. Binda Rani

Choudhary, but for whose constant encouragement and active support it would have been impossible for me to undertake this stupendous task or to bring it to a successful conclusion.

VALMIKI CHOUDHARY

Chandni Road

Patna-20

November 19, 1983

NOTE ON SECOND PRINT

In my humble opinion the test of popularity of any publication can be judged by its demand leading to a second and subsequent editions. Therefore, I express my gratefulness to the reader for the reprint of the first volume of "Rajendra Prasad: Correspondence and Select Documents".

On a query by Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Chairman of the National Committee for Celebrations of the Centenary of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, I had mentioned to her that on the basis of the material with me for the period up to 1948, I estimated a series of six volumes of the *Correspondence and Select Documents*. With the progress of the work, the material up to 1948 has however covered ten volumes.

In view of the stupendous task, it depends on my capability and my health to bring the series to completion. The deep interest shown by readers in India and abroad has certainly enthused me to continue with the work, and it appears to me that the expression of their goodwill will keep me fit to complete this task.

It may be mentioned that no financial or other help has been offered or extended for the completion of the series either by the Government of India or the State Government of Bihar except for the first five volumes. I however hope that both will come forward to extend the necessary financial support for the completion of this project of national importance.

VALMIKI CHOUDHARY

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New Delhi

3 November 1988

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CORRESPONDENCE

PART I

I. From Mahatma Gandhi

September 18, 1934

Dear Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

I sent through Mahadev¹ the reply to your wire, which Prabhavati² must have given you. Later, your letter also arrived. I have no recollection whether I replied to your first letter through someone or whether it remained unanswered. These days the work is quite pressing, some rest is also needed. It does not seem proper to make Abdul Ghaffar Khan the president [of the Congress] this time. He is a good man and full of love for the country. He is sincere and self-sacrificing. But he has little experience of the Congress and the session this time involves great responsibility. Among the men devoted to truth and non-violence and commanding popularity, I see none but you or Rajagopalachari³ or Jairamdas.⁴ But these two men cannot now be chosen and that leaves only you. Moreover, there is no other choice because of your contribution to the earthquake [relief] work. You have illness in the family as also your financial problem. But are you a family man any more? In other words, you serve the family only so far as it is a part of the people at large. The financial problem is almost solved. Jamnalalji⁵ is still at Bombay but that should cause no worry.

You should come over here as soon as you can. Come with more time on hand if it is possible to stay over for a few days. Anyway, I shall be happy with whatever time you can give me. If the date is fixed for certain, I shall try to call Sardar⁶ too. You can in no case go to Bombay before October 20th. The Khan brothers will be here during this period and we shall send for any others if their presence is required.

You must have seen my statement in the papers. The relations between Prabhavati and Jayaprakash⁷ have to be clarified. Arrangements have been made for her stay on receiving a telegram from Jayaprakash. I have, of course, told Prabha to discuss everything with you and Braj Kishore Babu.⁸

With blessings,
Bapu

¹Mahadev Desai—Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi. Translated Gandhiji's Autobiography from Gujarati into English.

²Wife of Jayaprakash Narayan. She was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi.

³A noted Gandhian. Participated in the freedom movement. Was the first Governor-General of India.

⁴Jairamdas Daulatram, a senior Congressman and a member of the Congress Working Committee during the freedom struggle. He was Food and Agriculture Minister at the Centre after Independence.

⁵Jamnalal Bajaj. A noted industrialist and philanthropist, close to Mahatma Gandhi.

⁶Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. A close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and the first Home Minister of independent India.

⁷Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly known as 'J.P.'

⁸Braj Kishore Prasad—an important associate of Mahatma Gandhi during Champaran. Father-in-law of Jayaprakash Narayan.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad:

2. From Mahatma Gandhi

October 30, 1934

I have received a letter from Dr. Bidhan, as also a copy of the one addressed to you. Hence I send you a copy of my reply to him.

Bapu

3. From Mahatma Gandhi

October 30, 1934

Bhai Rajendra Babu,

In accordance with my decision I hereby dissociate myself from the All-India Congress Committee. My name may please be removed from the list in the office of the committee.

Yours,
M.K. Gandhi

4. From Mahatma Gandhi

November 11, 1934

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

I have your letter but not the copy of the one you addressed to Dr. Roy.

I do not feel like expressing an opinion but to withhold it too does not now seem right. In my opinion no action should be taken for the present. Let there be fresh elections to the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. After they are over we may see what we can do. If the decision already taken is just and fair, making changes simply on account of the agitation in Bengal does not seem right. But then please do whatever you think right. In that case, my opinion need not be given any weight.

I do not feel I am obliged to make any alteration in what has been submitted in respect of Suresh. Get back your health, and come here soon.

With blessings,
Bapu

5. From Mahatma Gandhi

November 19, 1934

Bhai Rajendra Babu,

Your letter. If you can get away from there, do come here without going anywhere else. The weather is fine and you will have rest and, of course, peace.

The veracity of Agatha Garrison's¹ statement can be determined only when the reports come in. Satyamurti² has wired that the Working Committee should meet somewhere for this very object. It might be good to announce the meeting just now. We too will of course have to say something but I cannot participate in it as I would not like to say anything publicly.

I am sending a wire just now about your coming.

With blessings,
Bapu

¹ & ²Associates of Mahatma Gandhi:-

6. From Mahatma Gandhi

December 10, 1934

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

Your letter. I have had an exhaustive account from Lakshmidas too. A copy of the letter I sent to Maulana Sahab¹ is enclosed herewith. I expect to reach Delhi during the last week of this month. The Working Committee will of course meet there and we may defer our decision till then. I hope everything will be settled at that time. We should not be scared into taking a decision contrary to our principles. Whatever step we may take can be taken only on its own merit.

My programme is at the moment fixed only up to my Delhi visit. Correspondence with the Viceroy will continue. So far as is possible I want to avoid going to jail but the future rests with God.

May you maintain good health.

With blessings,
Bapu

Enclosure not included.

¹ Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, and Education Minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's first cabinet.

7. From Mahatma Gandhi

January 21, 1935

I see no harm in going. I think you should discuss everything but making it clear that you have no mandate¹. You could only convey the purport of the conversations to the Committee² and its decision. It should be strictly understood that though you would meet as representatives, the talks must be regarded as informal till they reach the stage of some concrete proposal to be discussed by the respective committees. At the end of the conversations the agreed purport should be reduced to writing and no report should be given to the Press of the conversation.

Bapu

¹ As Congress President the addressee was to negotiate with M.A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, "for an agreed settlement between the communities which could replace the so-called Communal Award". The talks started on January 23 and continued, with a short break, up to 1 March but without any tangible result.

² Congress Working Committee.

8. From Mahatma Gandhi

February 7, 1935

Bhai Rajendra Babu,

I have your letter. If the kind of compromise you have outlined in your letter can be brought about, I would love it. I see little possibility of that. But an effort can be made. Have you done what was to be done at Chapra?

Mahadev has gone to Calcutta. He will be back by the 9th.

With blessings,
Bapu

9. From Mahatma Gandhi

February 13, 1935

Bhai Rajendra Babu,

I replied to your letter by a telegram but Rajaji¹ arrived here yesterday. The fact is that on hearing the news I sent a wire and a letter too in reply to the correspondent's wire. He has sent the following reply:

"We have no further information than what has appeared in the newspapers which may be consulted. The funds are collected by the Government."

Upon this I telegraphed to Rajaji to send someone to Ceylon.² He either wrote or sent a wire to his friend who answered that no outside help was needed. Since then I have been silent. In my opinion someone should be sent there before any appeal is issued and that we have to do. Only a man of standing should go. Anyway, my mind is at peace. The day before yesterday a wire reached me from someone who had been at the Ashram.³ He too has supplied no facts. I have asked him to let me know what exactly happened and shall write to you further on hearing from him. I have had a talk with Rajaji. He expresses the same opinion as he did before. You will do what you think best.

I hope you are keeping well. We shall be meeting in March, perhaps.

With blessings,
Bapu

¹Chakravarti Rajagopalachari.

²Now Sri Lanka.

³Sadaquat Ashram, Patna; residence of Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

10. From Mahatma Gandhi

February 21, 1935

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

Jayaprakash had been to see me. I do feel that the Congress should fix one day for the Bengal troubles. I have even drafted a resolution and given it to Jayaprakash. He will send it on if he likes it.

This letter should be shown to Sardar as I have no time to write separately to him. I am leaving for Nagpur just now and shall be back tomorrow.

With blessings,
Bapu

11. From Mahatma Gandhi

February 28, 1935

Bhai Rajendra Babu,

As I am willing to do everything, why would I be averse to the joint electorate? If Muslims can accept even this, and if Sikhs and Hindus agree, I have no doubt it

will be extremely good. To bring round Malaviyaji¹ appears to be a difficult proposition, but he would put up no opposition if Sikhs could be persuaded. There is no occasion now for my writing to him though I shall do so if that is your wish. Ghanshyamdas² is enough. After the others have agreed even Jamnalalji can go to Panditji.

With blessings,
Bapu

¹ Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, noted freedom fighter; was also President of the Congress during the freedom struggle.

² Ghanshyamdas Birla, industrialist. He was president of the Harijan Sewak Sangh at the time.

12. From Mahatma Gandhi

March 27, 1935

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

The Bengal affair today is the most tangled and shameful one. Nothing can be accomplished by our forming a committee. None of the leaders of Bengal will co-operate in this and who will listen to other workers? Yet I feel that we ought to observe an all-India day. Other things can be considered when the report from Calcutta comes in.

We can do nothing in Ceylon. Whatever is done there is only through the Government. Poor Jairamdas does his little bit but I do not see anything more being done. If you can catch hold of a doctor there, do send him. I tried to send Bhasker, but he is unable to leave. Still I am trying to find someone.

With blessings,
Bapu

13. From Mahatma Gandhi

September 16, 1935

Bhai Rajendra Babu,

I have unwillingly begun to write in English. Mahadev is returning tomorrow with Sardar and Ghanshyamdas.

You must be well and then quickly come here if you can. Devdas¹ cannot spare

Pyarelal.² If you cannot come, I must send Mahadev to you. You may not be disturbed. Please, therefore, wire your intention.

Bapu

P.S.

Miraben had a bad attack of malaria. She has been free since yesterday. No cause for anxiety.

¹ Devdas Gandhi, son of Mahatma Gandhi. He was active during the freedom struggle. Later became Managing Editor of *The Hindustan Times*.

² Confidant and Secretary of Gandhi after Mahadev Desai. He was author of several works on freedom movement.

14. From Mahatma Gandhi

October 17, 1935

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
CARE CONGRESS
MADRAS

JAWAHARLAL MAY [HAVE] RECEIVED MOTILAL NEHRU'S LETTER [ABOUT]
SWARAJ BHAWAN¹ WANTS DEFINITE DECISIVE ATTITUDE [BY] CONGRESS
COMMITTEE

BAPU

¹ Ancestral home of the Nehrus in Allahabad, which was donated to the Congress.

15. From Jawaharlal Nehru

Badenweiler
20 November '35

My dear Rajendra Babu,

On my return from London I received your two letters dated 18th and 20th October.

As for Swaraj Bhawan I knew there had been some misunderstanding on the part of Mohanlalji but I am really surprised at the extent of this misunderstanding. I am grateful for the steps you have taken in the matter and I am sure that everything that is necessary will be done at your instance. I am sorry that this confusion arose, partly at my instance, and caused you unnecessary trouble.

The question of building a hospital in a part of the Swaraj Bhawan compound is no urgent one and had better be left over for the present. In any event I do not

see how it can even be considered unless there is a tangible scheme before us with definite promise of financial backing. It seems to me rather absurd for us to agree to a vague proposal which might later fall through for lack of support.

The question of foreign propaganda is an intricate one and involves all manner of considerations. At the same time it is important and I think the Working Committee cannot ignore it. My own viewpoint in regard to it is perhaps a little different from others'. It is often said, with perfect justice, that there is colossal ignorance about India in foreign countries. I would add that there is almost equally great ignorance about foreign countries in India. For me it is quite impossible to isolate the Indian problem from world problems. They are ultimately and even presently one and the same though naturally there are local differences. In order, therefore, for us to understand fully and endeavour to solve our own national problems it is quite essential for us to see them in relation to international affairs. I am afraid this is not the outlook of most of our Congress leaders, including perhaps Bapu. For a member of the Working Committee to say he is ignorant of or is not interested in international currents and affairs seems to me an extraordinary thing. If even the chosen executive of the Congress is ignorant of these how can it guide the nation? It is not good enough to say that we can consult experts about such matter. Experts do not shape wide policies or ought not to do so. And, in any event, it is the job of the Working Committee members and leading Congressmen to become experts in these vital problems if they are to guide aright.

Therefore I think it very necessary that we should develop as many international contacts as possible, more for our education than for the purpose of counteracting false propaganda. It is desirable for leading Congressmen to visit foreign countries from time to time to get in touch with worthwhile personalities there in the political, economic and cultural fields. It is also desirable for us to employ young men in this foreign work so as to train them for it. All this may sound ambitious and expensive and there will be all manner of difficulties, governmental and others. But it is the viewpoint that counts. If this is accepted it can be given effect to as circumstances permit.

Foreign propaganda as such in the restricted sense of the word cannot carry us far. There is no real field for it as people in other countries are too much occupied with their own troubles. What is more important is more publicity than propaganda. This helps in supplying facts and figures to people interested, and they are many, and also brings us international contacts. Publicity work and contacts must primarily be based on a strong and ably-staffed foreign department of the Congress in India. With the help of the airmail much can be done. But it is important that the person in charge must himself have intimate knowledge of politics and personalities abroad. The present bulletin, issued by the A.I.C.C. office, does some good, but it does not take us far.

The second step might be the establishment of publicity and information bureaus in suitable countries abroad. These can be of great help and their cost

need not be prohibitive. If such a step were contemplated I would suggest the best centre for Europe. The fascist countries are out of the question. Russia would present difficulties. London is in some ways a desirable centre but it does not touch the continent, and it is a very difficult place to work in, owing to the mutual rivalries and jealousies of the large number of Indians there. New York would be a good centre, and the Far East ought to have a centre.

If the Congress thought of starting such centres I would suggest that a beginning might be made with one at Prague. Such a centre should have a reference library and Indian newspapers etc., and the man in charge should be fully competent for the job.

The idea of having regular branches of the Congress abroad, as we used to have, is, I think, wrong. You cannot control them and there is bound to be conflict. The Congress can appoint an individual to represent it in a foreign country if it so chooses, or more modestly have an information bureau. This can be controlled.

Indians and others in foreign countries can of course start their own groups and societies in sympathy with the Congress. We can even encourage this and cooperate with them in some measure but on the clear understanding that they are no formal part of our organisation. We cannot affiliate them or allow ourselves to be committed by them. It is desirable that such groups and societies do not call themselves "Congress" or "National Congress" as this is likely to mislead.

In London recently a handful of persons have started what they call "The Indian National Congress in Great Britain". Some of these persons may be desirable, others not so. I do not know any of them sufficiently to judge them. But I had a feeling that they were exploiting the name of the Congress. On my arrival in London they distributed a leaflet condemning the organisers of the reception and stating that these people were anti-Congress and were merely pushing themselves forward on this occasion to gain notoriety. The leaflet was not against me, it was only against the reception committee. I believe Reuter cabled to India on the basis of this leaflet that the Congress in London condemned the reception or its organisers. This is a good instance of the way petty mischief can be done by individuals in the name of the Congress. This affair was a trivial one but it is quite possible that similar contingencies may arise again.

This group of protesters came to see me several times. They wanted me to go to a special function which they wanted to hold in my honour. I did not consent to it as I felt I was likely to be exploited. I also told them that it was very improper for them to use the Congress name for their activities whatever they might be. They were free and welcome to have a separate group working for India but this could not be in the name of the Congress. Further that their leaflet had been most objectionable. I enclose a letter from them to give their address. The letter gives a wrong impression of what I told them. One would imagine I approved of their organisation (I doubt if there is really an organisation) when I strongly urged them to drop the name and give up attacking others.

To avoid misconceptions I would suggest that the A.I.C.C. office might write to these people informing them that, while they welcomed the formation of Indian organisations abroad in the cause of Indian freedom, such organisations should not use the Congress name or make it appear in any way that they are a Congress agency. The present policy of the Congress is not to have branches abroad or to affiliate outside committees. Any organisations, however, that support Congress policy will have the cooperation of the A.I.C.C. office in the measure that is considered necessary and desirable. In pursuance of this policy the A.I.C.C. office has cooperated with some existing groups in London although they have represented varying outlooks. People who wish to help our cause should concentrate on the work before us and not go out of their way to attack other groups who might be working on slightly different lines. In the event of the Congress deciding to have accredited representatives or agencies abroad formal steps on this behalf will be taken. This cannot be done casually by individuals or groups. Therefore, the name of the Indian National Congress they have adopted should be dropped and another non-committal name taken.

Some such letter might be sent to them. Also I think a brief statement might be issued somewhat as follows:

It has been stated in the Press and in messages from London that an organisation has been formed in London bearing the name "The Indian National Congress in Great Britain". The A.I.C.C. office has no knowledge of this and it deprecates the use of the Congress name in this way without any official authority. The Congress has at present no official agency abroad though it gladly cooperates with and welcomes the formation of Indian or non-Indian groups abroad to serve the cause of India and the Congress. But such groups cannot use the name of the Congress or commit it in any way. As has been stated, the President and the Working Committee are earnestly engaged in considering the problem of international contacts and foreign publicity. Any steps that they may decide upon to take in this connection will be placed before the public in due course.

In London I met the members of the various Indian groups individually and severally. You know about them. There is a Conciliation Group (Carl Heath and Agatha Harrison etc.). These are good people, mostly Quakers, who believe in bringing about contacts between prominent Indians and men in authority. They work quietly and individually, frequently approaching the big noises. I like these people. But I must say that I do not attach much importance to this trend of work. I do not think it takes us anywhere and sometimes it may add to our difficulties by creating confusion of issues. Vital questions of national policy become converted into personal affairs and the merits and demerits of particular persons. To me it is wholly immaterial what personal virtues or failings of an Irwin, a Willingdon, or a Linlithgow might be. We have to deal with the policy of British imperialism. Not so with the Conciliation Group.

Then there is the "Friend of India" group. Also good and doing useful work in

publicity, but generally ineffective. There are no outstanding personalities among them, so far as I can see. Reginald Reynolds is one of them, but even he felt that they were becoming ineffective.

A third group is the "India League". This has become connected with the left wing of Labour and has some prominent men in it, like Harold Laski. Because of this it is definitely socialistic in outlook. Of the three it is the only really political organisation. The man who runs it is V.K. Krishna Menon whom perhaps you know. I met him for the first time. He is very able and energetic and is highly thought of in intellectual, journalistic and left-wing Labour circles. He has the virtues and failings of the intellectual. I was very favourably impressed by him. Unfortunately he has been very ill and has spent the last six months in hospital.

I do not know if this letter, in spite of its growing length, will be intelligible. I am afraid it is patchy, and I have just jotted down odd ideas without arranging them in proper order or giving a real answer to your question. You point out two difficulties in the way of foreign work—personal and finances. Both are formidable. There is a third. The Congress is such a vague and inchoate body today that it will be exceedingly difficult to find anyone to represent it properly. Such a representative, apart from general competence, must be in harmony with the Congress policy and must speak in the mental language of the West. It is quite possible to imagine that some of our prominent Congress leaders might be so out of tune with the thought of the West as to be hardly comprehensible here. I myself, with all my knowledge of men and events in India, find it very difficult at times to understand our own leaders. It almost seems to me that they are speaking in an unknown language. If I feel this way you can appreciate how much more a Westerner will feel.

This is a general consideration. Coming to the particular, I feel that the Congress today is in a state of ideological flux and does not quite know its mind. Take the recent A.I.C.C. meeting in Madras. All the major decisions were no decisions—they were merely a putting off of the decision or a delicate balancing on the fence. Our policy all along the line, even mentally, is becoming more and more one of non-action and non-thought. Constitutionally I am unable to appreciate this as I hold definite views about most matters, and am the reverse of a passive individual. Non-violent non-cooperation and civil disobedience were not, to me, mere non-resistance but the height of active resistance to evil doing. This dynamic quality seems to have disappeared now and we have a lifeless body which neither thinks nor acts and over which old incantations are repeated to give it the semblance of life.

Suppose you appointed me a Congress agent abroad—and I have certain qualifications which many others do not possess—what could I do? Apart from acting as a post office I would have no functions. The Congress having no clear policy on any matter which interests the West, I would simply have to keep mum.

Subhas Bose is in many ways an excellent person to have. He has considerable knowledge of foreign affairs and has many contacts. He would carry weight. But

he would have the same difficulty as I would have, perhaps more of it.

These are some odd thoughts for you to consider. I cannot go on as this letter is already unconscionably long.

Kamala's condition has been slowly improving but occasionally there are setbacks which dishearten. I am afraid that in any event she will be bedridden for long. I should certainly like to return to India in time for the Congress and I shall try to do so, if I can possibly manage it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Enclosure not included.

16. From Jawaharlal Nehru

Badenweiler
23 January, '36

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many thanks for your two cables and letter. The second cable came this afternoon. I am very glad to learn that the Congress dates have been fixed from April 7th to 14th. This gives me ample time and I hope I shall now be able to get to India well ahead of the Congress session. I was under the impression that under the constitution the Congress must be held in February and March. I suppose the Working Committee has stretched the constitution a little. I am personally glad it has, for it suits me. But I imagine that it will be rather warm in Lucknow then—though it will not be uncomfortably so. Perhaps a reason for your extending the dates was Bapu's ill health. Let us hope that he will soon be well. Also, I imagine that the Assembly members wanted to avoid a clash with their Assembly meetings.

As I cabled to you, I live in a state of uncertainty owing to Kamala's varying condition. After passing through the severe crisis of last month she has been in a peculiar state. There is no immediate crisis but there is a kind of continuing semi-crisis and certain complications appear to have set in, due largely to extreme weakness. Her heart is not as good as it was. This present state cannot continue for long. It will either grow worse or better, within the next three or four weeks at most. I mean a fairly definite change either way, for minor changes are constantly occurring. Latterly she has been slightly better. During the fairly critical period I should like to be with her or at least near her. The new Congress dates give me that chance and I am grateful to you.

We have decided to shift Kamala to Lausanne in Switzerland. She will probably be removed in about a week's time. The change, I hope, will do her good.

It is difficult to leave Kamala just at present but I have decided to adhere to my London programme. I am leaving for London day after tomorrow and may stay there ten days if I am not suddenly called back earlier. It is a very heavy and complicated programme and I am supposed to meet a variety of persons—politicians, writers, critics, economists, etc.—mostly English people. I think these contacts are useful and I find these personally stimulating. Unfortunately, the organisations interested in India in London find it difficult to cooperate with each other and they suspect each other of stealing a march over the other. I have tried my best not to associate myself with one to the exclusion of another but I have not wholly succeeded in removing suspicion and ill-will. It is extraordinary how people make mountains out of molehills.

I cannot say definitely when I shall be back in India but I shall certainly try to get there a clear month before the Congress.

As we are leaving Badenweiler our address will be changed. I cannot give you a definite address yet. For the time being the best address will be C/o Thomas Cook & Son, Rue du Mont Blanc, Geneva.

Congratulations on the splendid success of the Congress Jubilee.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

17. From Jawaharlal Nehru

Lausanne
10th February, '36

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your cable and your letter informing me the dates of the Congress. I am taking advantage of the new dates to stay on a few extra days here. But in any event I hope to reach India a good month before the Congress. The exact date has not been settled as yet but I shall fix it up soon. Approximately I should be in Allahabad by the 7th March or earlier.

I think that it will be better for me to meet you, Bapu, and others informally before a meeting of the Working Committee is held. It is these informal talks that count. When these talks should take place I leave it to you to decide. I do not know if Bapu will be well enough then to be bothered with discussions. If he has no objections we might meet at Ahmedabad or wherever he might be. In any event I shall have to go to Bapu.

I have decided to travel by air and to go direct to Allahabad. I should like to spend at least three days [there] before I go elsewhere. If you so wish it, you can fix the meeting of the Working Committee without waiting for my arrival. I

suppose there will be enough time to do so even afterwards.

My visit to London was very successful but of course that does not mean much. I shall tell you about it when we meet. Kamala has been a little better lately.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. From Jawaharlal Nehru

May 13, 1936

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just received your long letter of the 10th about the Bengal dispute. I have already written to you and requested you—as indeed the A.I.C.C. has done—to take full charge of this matter and decide it as you think proper. If I may suggest one thing, the consideration of the problem need not necessarily be one of the full legal type with all the tricks and hoodwinkings that our past experience unfortunately reminds us of. That kind of thing should be definitely discouraged though perhaps it may not be possible to avoid it altogether.

As for the intervening period, before fresh elections are held, obviously there must be some authority. There cannot and should not be a gap. In spite of the difficulty of having a partially constituted B.P.C.C. [Bengal Provincial Congress Committee] functioning for this period I can see no other way out. This is not a nominated committee, but a partially elected committee. If it represents even half the Province, it should, I think, function. The real way out of the difficulty is to have the elections held as soon as possible and to prevent the tactics of delay. I do not see why it should take months to scrutinise the list of members or to decide about future elections.

This whole Bengal affair is, you will agree with me, almost a nightmare and very selfishly I am casting the burden on you. The way out of it will have to be not by interminable legal arguments, nor by nominations and pacts, but by some kind of elections however imperfect they might be. The sooner these are held the better.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

19. From Vallabhbhai Patel

May 29, 1936

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of 24th with Kripalani's letter to you enclosed with it.

His Bombay speeches have disturbed me much. I am not worried so much about khaddar. It will recoil on him if he goes on in this fashion. But I cannot stand the attitude of injured innocence he has assumed regarding the nomination of members in the W.C. [Working Committee], particularly his statement regarding omission of a woman. Rajaji feels equally strongly.

Bapu had written to him on these points and the extracts of his reply and the last letter of Bapu to him on the subject of the W.C. nominations are enclosed herewith for your information. Re: khadi—he says the report is not correct and he had issued a correct version of his speech next day though I have not seen it reported anywhere. His reply about the W.C. is bad enough and I don't think I can swallow it. It is a humiliating position in which I for one would not agree to stay at any cost. . . .

I am going to Bangalore tomorrow where I am staying till the 12th and then we disperse for our respective places. Hope you are doing well.

Vallabhbhai Patel

Enclosure not included.

20. From Mahatma Gandhi

June 5, 1936

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

Pass on the enclosed letter to Pierre Ceresole. I saw your letter. You must have received a copy of Jawaharlal's letter. This time we shall have to further clarify many things.

I hope you are keeping well.

With blessings,
Bapu

Enclosure not included.

21. From Mahatma Gandhi

June 23, 1936

Bhai Rajendra Babu,

I delayed reply to your letter till Ceresole arrived. He tells me that all the difficulties have been resolved. That is why I did not hurry. If there are still some loose ends you can tell me on coming here. I shall leave here on the 27th. I am now using my left hand having overworked the right one.

With blessings,
Bapu

*22. From Members, All India Congress Committee, to Jawaharlal Nehru and
Rajendra Prasad*

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU
RAJENDRA BABU
CONGRESS HOUSE BOMBAY

DARBHANGA CONGRESS AUTHORITIES RESORTING QUESTIONABLE METHODS
DELEGATE ELECTIONS ELEPHANT LET LOOSE HEADS BROKEN VIOLENT
DISTURBANCES GIVING GRIEVOUS INJURIES BALLOT BOXES LOOTED WITHOUT
43 SEATS 36 ELECTIONS INCOMPLETE PRAY INTERVENE ADVISE PROVINCE
APPOINT RETURNING OFFICER ENJOYING CONFIDENCE BOTH PARTIES

MEMBERS ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

23. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Congress House
Bombay-4
2nd January 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am sorry to say that I may not be able to come there at all. On coming here the doctors examined me and they found innumerable germs of amoebic dysentery from the stools. It is a clear case of bad relapse and I am asked to go through a long course of treatment. It means that I cannot leave Bombay for at least 2 days. I have just got a wire from Anugrah Babu asking me to wire time of my coming there, but under these circumstances I feel quite helpless.

About financial help, I wish to know what exactly will be your requirements. You will get the 27 without any more difficulty, I hope. And I think it is better to draw the amount now so that there may be no last moment hitch. I have sent you 10 already when you were at Wardha. Now you must let me know what exactly you want me to do in the matter.

I hope the President's tour will rouse up your Province and you may not need anybody else to help you. You must have noticed that all those Mahakoshal people have withdrawn their resignations. Even Makhanlal has also withdrawn — how surprising. Many people were saying that. Simply want to get out of an awkward situation created by them and Jawaharlalji gave them that opportunity.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

elections. The Sardars and Parganaits are selected as persons of independent influence and responsibility in their locality and receive a small stipend in consideration of the functions which they exercise with regard to certain police and revenue matters. They are not disqualified from standing for election in the present general election, nor are they affected by rule 23(2) of the Government Servants' Conduct Rules, which relates only to whole-time Government servants. Since by law they are eligible for election, they have the right to take part in the electoral campaign; to prevent them from doing so by executive action would not only be unconstitutional but would amount to leaving the Santals to choose their representatives in the legislature without the help of their natural leaders. In the last few lines of your letter you ask that the Sardars and Parganaits should be prevented from using their position as police and revenue officers for electoral propaganda. It is not possible for me to deal with this in detail since you have not told me to what definite action you refer. The fact that a Sardar is also a person who exercises police and revenue functions does not debar him from conducting electoral propaganda, but he is not at liberty to use those functions, or to threaten to use them for the purpose of compelling a voter to vote against his own inclinations.

Yours sincerely,
W.B. Brett

¹ The then Chief Secretary of Bihar.

26. To Jimut

Hazaribagh
23.1.1937

My dear Jimut,

I think you ought to know something about the experiences I had yesterday. I left Ranchi about 1 p.m. for Hazaribagh; I had to address a meeting at Mandu on the way and another was improvised at Ramgarh. I met Bhabatosh somewhere when I had just passed Ramgarh. But a car which had been sent from Ramgarh overtook us only about a mile or two out of Ramgarh and I had to return to Ramgarh to address the meeting there. I was feeling tired and as they were arranging the meeting I lay down on a cot at Ramgarh and as usual was fast asleep within a minute or two. All on a sudden I was roused after 10 minutes or so by a tremendous noise. I came out and saw about 200 people assembled waiting for me and about a dozen others on an open lorry with green flags (green is the colour of Surath Babu's box). They were armed with funnels and were shouting at the top of their voice which was much magnified by the funnels. I wanted to

address the meeting and proceeded further to Mandu where Bhabatosh had proceeded to keep the meeting ready for me. These people in the lorry were creating so much noise that it was impossible to say anything. I requested them by sign to let me speak but its only effect was to increase the noise. Much more objectionable than the noise was the content of it. They were abusing me like anything. He is a *chor*, a coloured jackal, drive him away, and so forth. They were not more than 12 or 15 people in all and the people assembled could have dealt with them easily enough but I controlled them. I managed to address the small gathering in the midst of the din and noise just for a few minutes. I told them to vote for the Congress candidate and that the most effective reply to this kind of rowdyism was that not a single vote was cast in the green box. The audience raised their hands signifying assent. As soon as I had finished and sat down there were added noise, jeering and derisive cheers. I left the place in my car and as it passed the lorry there was a fresh demonstration in the same style.

I reached Mandu where Bhabatosh was waiting for me. The meeting was in a *hat* and so there was naturally some noise. But I addressed the meeting for a short time without any incident as the lorry which was carrying the party could not come as fast as my car and arrived after I had finished. I had apprehended that they would follow me and so it happened. When I was just leaving these people got out of the lorry with green flags and made the same kind of demonstration—one of them trying to show the stick of the flag as if he was going to poke my eyes with it. I simply smiled and passed on.

Bhabatosh and I reached Hazaribagh just a few minutes before 5 p.m. and after dropping my luggage at the Congress office we proceeded to the grounds of the Keshab Hall where a public meeting was to be held. When we reached the place we found the same lorry with the same group standing just in front of the gate across it closing all entrance for our car. We got out of the car and walked in while these people were shouting and jeering.

It was a good gathering which had assembled and received us well. When I got on the platform I saw a Police Officer approaching the lorry and asking it to move away. Before I began, the lorry had left the place with its load of men. I spoke about the Congress programme and appealed to the people to vote for Congress candidates—yourself and Krishna Ballabh. Just towards the end of my speech I saw the lorry returning to its former position. The occupants got down and came to the meeting and stood on the fringe of it. While I was dealing with the Congress programme and cognate matters they kept quiet. Just at the end of my speech I told the audience briefly my experience at Ramgarh and Mandu and asked them not to get excited over such incidents, and, as worse things were likely to happen, to keep their temper and reply to them by casting their votes in the black and white box and the red box, when trouble started again. This time it was not din and noise but an attempt to abuse me by one of the party. The audience which had already begun to get excited by my recital of the previous incidents became furious as soon as this man started by saying that I was telling lies. I had

to control the audience which was in a very angry mood. Someone snatched away the Gandhi cap which the interrupter was wearing and fearing that worse might happen to him I signed him to come near me. He managed to reach the dais and was thus saved. But on coming there and under my protection he wanted to speak again in the same strain. The audience was so excited that it could not listen and had it not been for me he would have come in for a good hammering. The Police Inspector, seeing that his presence and manners were so provocative that any moment trouble might begin again, removed him from the meeting. It was all quiet again and I addressed a few words once more emphasising that people should exercise restraint in spite of provocation.

My impression is that the whole thing was organised with the consent of Surath Babu. As my visit was known the lorry had been sent with these men to disturb the meetings at Ramgarh and Mandu. At Hazaribagh the lorry was sent away by the police in the beginning but returned, I believe, after receiving fresh instructions from the headquarters. As the road is at some distance from where the meeting was being held, any shouting by a dozen or more men was not likely to disturb it and so the tactics were changed and they were probably told to go and create disturbance in the meeting itself. They had probably not counted the public reaction to this kind of conduct.

I have taken pains to write all this and I ask you to read these six pages for some reasons. Among the party in the lorry were some Bengali boys, some Musalmans who I suppose had been hired, a Brahmin from Benaras who was the person whose cap was taken away. I saw him acting in close cooperation with a man who I am informed is a Musalman. I am told that they are going to follow me to Barhi, Bagodar and Hazaribagh Road where I have to address meetings. My anxiety is not about myself but about them. An infuriated crowd may any moment get out of control and there is enough good reason to get infuriated. I hope, however, to control the situation as best as I may.

You know the tension that exists in this District between Bengalis and Beharis. That has been considerably enhanced by yesterday's incidents. I am glad of one thing. In spite of all this you are going to get all Behari votes in all the towns that I have visited — Daltonganj, Lohardaga and Hazaribagh. I cannot say with some definiteness about Ranchi as I could not get detailed information within the very short time that I spent there. Of course Rungta is doing his best. But the voting is not going to be as between a Bengali and a Behari, or a Marwari. Even Marwaris will help you everywhere. Rungta will get some votes but not on communal lines. This is of course quite satisfactory.

On the other hand Babu Nageshwar Sinha who is our candidate for the upper chamber against Nalini Babu tells me that he has not received a single Bengali vote. It has not been so because they do not accept the Congress policy and programme. I saw particularly at Daltonganj that the same gentlemen who are working hard for other Congress candidates like Rajkishore, Yadubans and yourself in that district have not voted for Nageshwar. This becomes all the more

supported Congress nominees. This has naturally given rise to a great deal of comment amongst Congressmen and others and I have received many letters asking as to why disciplinary action should not be taken against him when so many others have been proceeded against. I should like your advice in the matter. I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending to Malaviyaji.

Krishna Kant Malaviya has also been carrying on active propaganda against several Congress candidates in the Punjab as well as, I am told, in the Frontier Province. I am writing to him to enquire about it.

Kindly let me have your reply at an early date.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Enclosure:

Anand Bhavan
Allahabad
January 26, 1937

My dear Malaviyaji,

I have been much distressed at the development in connection with your support of Shannodevi and Keshoram and your opposition to the Congress candidates who were opposing these two. On the merits I do feel that you have supported the wrong candidates. On further enquiry I am convinced that Keshoram has a most reactionary record and has been opposing the national cause these many years. The allegation against him of having been present with Dyer in Jallianwala Bagh is probably incorrect, but the other charges are substantially true. I have considerable evidence to this effect but I will not trouble you with it now.

As regards Shannodevi I found that practically all Congressmen in the Punjab, belonging to both groups, were opposed to her. Even the leading nationalists in the Punjab were opposed to her. Her tactics in the course of the election have been most unfortunate and reprehensible. She has been opposing Dr. Gopi Chand's candidature also. Under the circumstances it was quite impossible for the Congress to adopt her, even if there was constitutional way open for this. And this as I told you was not open to me at this stage. I sent you a long telegram to Benaras but I am afraid you must have missed it.

But merits apart what I am faced with is the clear position that Shannodevi and Keshoram are opposing Congress nominees and you are openly supporting them. What am I to do about this? I am getting large numbers of letters of protest and of enquiry as to what steps we should take in the matter. I do not know what to say in reply. Your general and particular support of many Congress candidates

The question of ministries is still undecided and all speculations in regard to it are premature and undesirable. There is, however, another question: as to who is going to be the President of the Legislature. It is likely that our policy will be to put up a Congress Member for this post and to ask the party to support him. This post is an important one involving constant contact with the representatives of Government and requiring the possession of many qualities. We cannot distribute this or any other post or office as rewards to individuals, however deserving of reward they might be. We have to keep the larger viewpoint of our cause and our freedom struggle always before us. Therefore, all such matters must be considered from this larger viewpoint. It is desirable, therefore, that you or your party should arrive at no final decision in such matters without reference to the Working Committee. Whenever such questions arise, I shall expect to hear from you.

I shall be glad if you will communicate the contents of this letter to the Leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party in your Province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Enclosure:

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
3-3-1937

To

All Provincial Congress Committees.

Dear Comrade,

I should like to draw your particular attention to the series of resolutions passed by the Working Committee at Wardha recently. You must have seen these resolutions in the Press and they will be sent to you soon from our office. These resolutions give a definite and clear lead to the Congress organisation and to the country generally in regard to our future work and policy both inside the legislatures and outside. Final decisions about this policy will no doubt be taken by the A.I.C.C. in Delhi but, whatever the decisions on the question of ministries might be, this general background of our policy is clear and is bound to remain. Therefore every newly elected Congress member of the legislatures as well as all other Congress workers should be fully acquainted with it and should act up to it. You will, therefore, kindly take immediate steps to inform all such persons as well as all Congress Committees in your jurisdiction of these resolutions. At the next meeting of your Provincial Congress Committee these resolutions should be read out.

In particular I should like to draw your attention, and through you that of all Congressmen in your Province, to the immediate necessity of our organisational work being carried on in rural and other areas at almost the same tempo as during election time. The elected members have a special responsibility for this in their own constituencies. They should also see to it that the people in their areas are not harassed or ill-treated because of their support of the Congress in the elections and every such case should be investigated.

Recently hail and frost has done great damage to crops in North India and the peasantry in these areas are alarmed and distressed. In all such cases Congress workers, and Congress members of legislatures, should make personal enquiries and help the peasantry in putting forward demands for remission and other forms of help to relieve their distress.

Leaders and members of Congress Parliamentary parties should remember that we can enter into no alliances with other groups, nor can we negotiate with Government or their representatives in regard to our future work in the legislatures. So long as the A.I.C.C. has not definitely laid down its directions no such conversations can serve any useful purpose. In the event of any particular developments taking place the matter should be referred to us to ensure that an identical and uniform policy is followed everywhere.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
President, A.I.C.C.

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

29. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

P.O. Ziradei
Dist. Saran
10th March '37

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I have received your two circular letters—one intended for the guidance of members of the Legislative Assembly which I have forwarded to Babu Sri Krishna Sinha who has been elected leader of the Assembly Party in my Province and the other dealing with leakage of Working Committee discussions. It is much to be regretted that anything should go out and it is well that you are going to discuss the matter at the next meeting of the Working Committee.

A situation has recently been developing in my Province which is not free from anxiety for us in the future and I write this to seek your advice. There is a place called Barahaya in the district of Monghyr. It is a pretty big village inhabited

mostly by Bhumihars who are middle class zamindars and cultivators and quite well-to-do. During the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930-32, they were enthusiastically with the Congress and many persons courted imprisonment. The Government marked it out for special treatment and posted additional police at the cost of villagers who were made to pay anything between Rs.80,000 and a lakh annually for three consecutive years. We have always looked upon the village as a Congress stronghold and the Government was unable to break its spirit in spite of severe repression.

The village has a peculiar geographical position. It is on the Ganges bank and a big area, covering several thousand acres, gets flooded every year. The silt that is left behind makes the land very fertile which gives a good harvest of wheat, barley, gram, etc. The prosperity of the people is very largely due to this. This vast area has very sparse population and the residents of Barahaya have big fields. It is said that some of them are aggressive landlords and have acquired big plots by squeezing out the smaller tenants. On the other hand most of these have held the lands for generations and, barring some, most of their land is ancestral. The Kisan movement has taken a turn within recent months. All these lands which are in the possession of the landlords are recorded as their *bakhist* lands. It is a technical expression in the Tenancy Act and connotes land in actual cultivation of the landlord in which a tenant can acquire occupancy right, if he remains in possession for ten years and under certain other conditions. The practice of landlords in respect of their *bakhist* lands ordinarily is not to allow the same tenant to remain in possession of the same land for the required period and otherwise prevent his acquiring occupancy right, even if they allow tenants to cultivate their *bakhist* lands. In this area also the landlords used to settle some of their *bakhist* lands with tenants for short terms. Dispute arose some months ago between the landlords and tenants, as the latter refused to give the former their ploughs during cultivation season gratis as was the custom and perhaps also to work in the landlords' fields. The landlords refused to settle their *bakhist* lands with the tenants. The fields were somehow cultivated and the harvesting has commenced. It is reported that the tenants in large numbers go to the *bakhist* land of the landlords and cut and take away the crop, although they did not sow the crop at all. This is being done not only against the repressive landlords but without discrimination. On the side of the tenants it is claimed that they had grown the crop which they are cutting. It is doubtful to what extent the claim is true and can be substantiated. The landlords have been approaching us to help them. In the meantime the magistrate has also been approached and has sent police force to prevent loot of the crop and ordered arrests. One prominent Kisan Sabha worker who is also one of our principal workers in the area, Sjt. Karyanand Sharma, has been arrested and it is reported about 100 tenants have also been arrested. I have asked Babu Sri Krishna Sinha who is a resident of the district and fully acquainted with the situation to visit the place and deal with it. The difficulty that faces us is this. While it may be that in some cases the *bakhist*

of the landlord has been acquired by selling out the tenant for arrears of rent — (We have no ejectment for arrears of rent in Bihar in the Tenancy Act and the landlord has to sue for arrears and sell the holding in execution of his decree like any other creditor only getting a first charge on the holding if he is the sole landlord) — there are also cases in which what is recorded as *bakhast* has always been in possession of the landlord for generations or has been acquired or purchased by him from another landlord in whose possession it has been for generations. No tenant has ever had anything to do with it. The loot of the crop is indiscriminate and takes place in the land of any and every landlord whether he is oppressive or otherwise and whether the land was cultivated by the tenants or not. So far as I have been able to know from the talk I had with the persons of the locality, the trouble is in an area covering about 20 miles, if not more. I have mentioned only the name of Barahaya which is most prominent but there are several other villages involved. I do not think the Kisan Sabha has instigated the tenants to loot but there is no doubt the situation is largely due to the general awakening among the kisans and the anti-zamindar feeling which prevails. I do not think the kisans are organised enough to withstand repression which may follow and they may become demoralised. While Congressmen sympathise with the trouble of the tenants generally speaking and like to help them, they find it difficult to justify and support this loot of crop. I am informed the magistrate was also sympathetic towards the tenants but has changed his attitude after the general looting has commenced. The extent of this loot is not known and it is possible that it is exaggerated but there is no doubt that there is a general widespread movement in the locality which may spread to adjoining parts. It is in this difficult situation which is full of possibilities that I seek your advice and guidance. I am anxious that the awakening among the tenants should not be allowed to die down under the repression which is bound to come and which has commenced. I am equally anxious that the Congress organisation should not be allowed to break down as is likely if we do not intervene and bring about a settlement. A settlement is becoming more and more difficult after the intervention of the police and more and more complications are bound to arise. In law, the tenants will have no case, and are not resourceful enough even to fight it out in courts. Sri Babu was telling me that if the loot stopped it was possible to arrange with the landlords to settle the lands with the tenants as used to be done before, i.e., without occupancy right and perhaps to some other concessions. But there is no one who can speak for the tenants as a body and stop the loot. Since then the police have come in and I do not know how things stand at present.

The difficulty and complexity of the situation is the excuse for this long letter which I am writing from my village. I shall be reaching Patna on the 12th and will be expecting a reply.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

30. From the President, Bihar Jamiatalmumineen

12th March 1937

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
DIGHAGHAT

BACKWARD MOMIN COMMUNITY FORMS HALF MOSLEM INDIA WILL
CONGRESS INCLUDE ONE MOMIN BIHAR CABINET HAFIZ ZAFAR HASAN IN LA
PLEADER BIHARSHARIF READY TO SIGN CONGRESS'CREED FACILITATING
MOSLEM CONTACT RECALL MAHATMA GANDHIS ASSURANCE TO MOMINS
DURING BIHARSHARIF VISIT

HAKIM WASIAHMAD PRESIDENT
BIHAR JAMIATALMUMINEEN
SOHSARIA

31. From Narasingrao Deepnarayan

16 March 1937

RAJENDRA PRASAD

PATNA

CHAKRADHARPUR CONGRESS PRAYS INCLUSION KRISHNABALLABH IN
MINISTRY REPRESENTING CHOTANAGPUR

NARASINGRAO DEEPNARAYAN

32. From Raghusundan Prasad¹

16 March 1937

RAJENDRABABU
CONGRESS
PATNA

SUKHANRAMS SECRETARYSHIP MAY BE CONSIDERED

RAGHUNANDAN PRASAD

¹A prominent Congress leader of Bihar.

33. From Vallabhbhai Patel

17 March 1937

RAJENDRABABU

CONGRESS PATNA

RAMNARAYAN¹ WIRES QUOTE IGNORING CONGRESS ABILITIES MINISTERS
SELECTED COMMUNAL LINES PRAY ASK BEHAR LEADER STAY ANNOUNCE TILL
ENQUIRY BY YOU SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT MAY FOLLOW DELAY UNQUOTE CALL
HIM AND SATISFY

VALLABHBHAI

¹ Ramnarayan Singh. Member of Central Legislative Council in 1927, and that of Central Legislative Assembly in 1936.

34. From Secretary, Harijan Legislatures Party

17 March 1937

RAJENDRAPRASAD

CARE CONGRESS CUTTACK

IMPORTANT CONVERSATION REGARDING HARIJAN MINISTER ESSENTIALLY
NEEDED EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY DETAIL FOLLOWS SADAKAT ASHRAM

RAMPD SECY HARIJAN
LEGISLATURES PARTY

35. From Abdul Bari

17 March 1937

SJ RAJENDRA PRASAD

CONGRESS OFFICE

CUTTACK

COME EARLIER URGENT

ABDULBARI

36. To Vallabhbhai Patel

24th March 1937

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

PHONE 30588

BOMBAY

DEVELOPMENTS REQUIRE CONSULTATION SUGGEST YOUR IMMEDIATE COMING
ALLAHABAD MEET PRESIDENT MAULANA MYSELF TELEPHONING THURSDAY
MORNING BETWEEN EIGHT NINE

RAJENDRA PRASAD

37. To C. Rajagopalachari

25th March 1937

CHAKRAVARTI RAJAGOPALACHARI
BAZLULAH ROAD
THYAGARAJANAGAR

GENERAL PROMISE HELP COOPERATION AVAILABLE BUT NOT PRESCRIBED
ASSURANCE FURTHER CONSULTATION THIS AFTERNOON WIRE SITUATION
THERE AND ADVISE PHONE NUMBER 28 PATNA

RAJENDRA PRASAD

38. To Mahadev Desai

25th March 1937

MAHADEV DESAI
MAGANWADI
WARDHA

GENERAL PROMISE HELP SYMPATHY AVAILABLE BUT NOT PRESCRIBED
ASSURANCE FURTHER CONSULTATION THIS AFTERNOON STOP SAME POSITION
U.P. AND ORISSA STOP CONSULT BAPU EARLIEST AND TELEPHONE ME PATNA 28

RAJENDRA PRASAD

39. From C. Rajagopalachari

25 March 1937

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
TWO LONG TALKS TODAY MEETING HIM AGAIN SATURDAY

RAJA

40. From C. Rajagopalachari

25 March 1937

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
PATNA

SAW GOVERNOR POSITION EXACTLY SAME FURTHER CONVERSATION THIS
AFTERNOON AND SATURDAY

RAJA

41. From Mahatma Gandhi

Wardhagānj
25 March 1937

BABU RAJENDRAPRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
PATNA
NOTHING SHORT PRESCRIBED ASSURANCE CAN ANSWER

BAPU

42. From Jawaharlal Nehru

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
29-3-1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I wrote to you three days ago enquiring from you when you would like the Working Committee or your Sub-Committee to meet to consider the situation that has arisen. It is clear now that there is going to be no Congress ministry anywhere. Although our general attitude has been laid down it will no doubt be desirable to issue more detailed directions for the future. Probably in the course of the next three or four days, or less, we shall know the general lines on which Government proposes to act in the Provinces.

Maulana Abul Kālam Azad has been here since yesterday. He feels that an early meeting of the Parliamentary Sub-Committee is desirable and he suggests that this should be held in Allahabad: It might be held at any time between the 5th and the 11th April. He will come up again for the meeting. If this Sub-Committee meets, the desirability of having a full meeting of the Working Committee later may be considered at the time. Could you kindly let me know what you think of this proposal of having a meeting of your Sub-Committee in Allahabad early in April. Perhaps Govind Ballabh Pant could also attend this meeting, as well as any other person you would suggest. I shall expect a telegram from you in reply.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

I am also writing to Vallabhbhai on this issue.

43. To Vallabhbhai Patel

March 1937

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL

BARDOLI

SRIKRISHNABABU REFUSED GOVERNOR TRYING FORM NON-CONGRESS MINISTRY STOP EARLY MEETING PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE DESIRABLE WIRE WHEN WHERE

RAJENDRA PRASAD

44. From Govind Ballabh Pant

New Delhi

2nd April 1937

My dear Rajen Babu,

I find that the meeting of the Working Committee proposed for the 10th has been cancelled for the present. We have a meeting of our Provincial Committee on that very day, so I welcome this change. Besides, it will give me some recess as I have to be here till the 5th.

So the Government has again maintained its traditions. I do not yet know what mysterious influences upset their intentions. To all appearances they looked satisfied with our resolution and the comments in the Press on the whole friendly. Unless we assume a Machiavellian conspiracy designed to mislead us the somersault must be attributed to the irresistible pressure of reactionary forces. Whatever be the reasons I feel that on the whole we have emerged triumphant out of this ordeal. The Congress prestige has risen higher and our conduct, being in complete conformity with our general attitude and resolutions, perfectly appropriate and unassailable. It requires continuous activity in the countryside where our critics take advantage of the situation. The contacts with the masses have to be ceaselessly maintained. It is just likely that the assemblies in your Province and my own may not be asked to meet for several months yet — even the oath-taking formality may be postponed. In that case we have to hold present meetings of our party in order to criticise the administration and to press our point of view regarding problems that are bound to arise from day to day. The ministry has been formed in your Province. It is a curious personnel. Anugrah Babu told me that none of them has heard of even one of the four names mentioned in this connection. The Governor of our Province has been unsuccessful in his endeavours so far, with the result that no ministry has yet been formed although the fateful 1st of April has come and gone. Sri Babu¹ has

recited to me that talk between him and Hallet. I will rehearse to you the Lucknow episode when we meet. Hope this finds you well.

Yours sincerely,
G.B. Pant

¹Sri Krishna Sinha.

45. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Congress House
Bombay
3rd April 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have not heard from you at all since the breakdown with Government. I have been reading your statements in the Press. But that is not enough, you must keep me informed of what is happening in your Province. One thing I have to ask you is that you should keep in constant touch with our people in Orissa. Attempts will be made in that out-of-the-way place to break the Congress group's solidarity and, I am afraid, our people there are more exposed to intrigues from outside and less able to resist temptations or intimidation and pressure owing to internal jealousy and disunion. You are nearby, and you alone can look after that Province.

Hope you are keeping fit.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

46. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

April 4, 1937

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

I have your letter. What has been done regarding Hindi-Hindustani has been well done. A start should certainly be made towards putting into effect the statement that has been issued. The suggestion about a conference is good but in the atmosphere that prevails I have some doubt about its success. But what can one do about it? Success is bound to come sooner or later if we make the effort. So you must continue your endeavours as and when you find the opportunity.

There is no cause for worry on account of my health.

With blessings,

47. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

April 5, 1937

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

The Harijan brethren have evinced great courage and sacrifice. I cannot adequately congratulate them. On my part I feel that all that has happened has happened for the good. How has it affected our people?

With blessings,
Bapu

48. *From Mahatma Gandhi*Wardhaganj
6 April 1937

RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM PATNA

WIRED BARDOLOI AS FOLLOWS QUOTE ADVISE CONGRESSMEN ABSTAIN UNDER WRITTEN PROTEST BY LEADER AFTER CONSULTATION CONGRESS MEMBERS SINCE CONGRESS ENTERED ASSEMBLY EXPOSE FUTILITY CONSTITUTION AND SINCE PROVINCES WHERE CONGRESS HAD MAJORITY IT HAS BEEN FLOUTED CONGRESS MEMBERS MUST DECLINE ATTEND FORMAL FUNCTIONS WHERE NO EFFECTIVE OPPOSITION COULD BE SHOWN WITHOUT UNBECOMING DEMONSTRATION

BAPU

49. *From Mahadev Desai*Wardha
6.4.37

My dear Rajen Babu,

I had been out for a couple of days and received your letter only today. Fortunately Bapu had opened it in my absence and written the enclosed to you, which please show to both of our friends.

I shed tears for you as I read the account you have so vividly given, and my heart goes out in respectful admiration to both Dr. Raghunandan and Jagjivan Ram for their having emerged as the purest gold out of the fire through which

they were tried. For them there could be a greater temptation, and nothing could have been nobler than their conquest of it.

I feel like giving the whole story in your words to the readers of *Harijan* but I shall not do so without Bapu's permission. I think he will not object, now that the story is in the papers.

I have just sent you the enclosed telegram. Fortunately Sardar came with me this morning from Bombay; and the telegram which was repeated from Bombay was seen by Bapu in his presence this morning. Bapu dictated the reply which now goes both to Bardoloi and to you in the Sardar's name.

Yours affectionately,

Madadev

P.S. Sardar proposes to stay here for a couple of days. No W.C. meeting, so meet only in Belgaum on the 16th. But what is this disquieting report of your health? You say nothing about it in your letter. Please do let us have full details.

Mahadev

Enclosure not included.

50. From *Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Congress House
Bombay-4
7.4.37

My dear Rajen Babu

I came here yesterday to consult Bapu in the matter of the final selection of the Congress site and I am going back to Bombay tomorrow. I saw your letter to Bapu about the splendid behaviour of your depressed class candidates. All honour to them. It is a great thing for them as well as for the Congress. We can all be proud of them.

I read in the Press some report about your health which has disturbed me much. Does it mean that you would not be able to come to Hudly? It would be very great disappointment to all of us to miss you there. I hope there is nothing wrong with you.

I am banking on our meeting at Hudly for a quiet talk on many matters.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

51. From Govind Ballabh Pant

Haldwani

8th April 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I was just on the point of writing to you when I received your letter. I have been concerned to hear of the deterioration in your health. From the medical report that appeared in the papers recently it appears that your weak fraile has been greatly shaken during the election campaign and since. You have mercilessly overworked yourself regardless of consequences. Emergency brooks no law and no regulation. So I am not surprised to find that you need absolute rest for some time. I trust you will allow yourself at least the minimum rest necessary for recuperation as otherwise even your public utility is likely to be prejudiced. I should, however, like to know more about your present state and shall feel obliged if you will kindly drop a line or two to me every week until you have regained your normal state.

I dare say you have been following all that is passing here and abroad. Some of our friends were unduly depressed on the breakdown of the first negotiations but majority, I believe, were satisfied that there was no atmosphere for constructive work. The controversy has mainly centred round technicalities which are hardly of much importance where grave human issues are involved. I personally feel that if there is a will to arrive at a settlement hair-splitting quibbles would not stand in the way. They are pressed into service only to serve as an excuse for what one is not prepared to accept in substance. The real obstacle is false sense of prestige which still haunts the British Government, and not the language of the Act. If there is a dawn of sense and genuine desire to allow the Congress a fair deal they may yet realise their mistake. Otherwise we will continue our work in our old ways unperturbed and unexcited. Care will have to be taken, however, to avoid pitfalls and false steps. I am writing today to the Governor here to convene the session of the Assembly forthwith as the Act contemplates and if he fails to do so I propose to advise my party to start their legislative activities in an informal manner. Thus we will be initiating a sort of parallel Government, or, to be more precise, a semblance of it.

I should be chary to ignore your wishes. I am anxious to carry out your directions as to my proceeding to Santhal Parganas for their conference. But I have many accumulated arrears to attend to as I had not a moment's time to myself continuously for several months. The Working Committee is likely to meet in the last week at Wardha and our dates may conflict. I wonder if they can conveniently wait till July or if it would suit their convenience. The agriculturists should, perhaps, be absorbed in their operations and may not find any leisure then. I am finding a real difficulty in my attending the conference in the latter half

of this month as the organisers desire. I have received a telegram from the Secretary just now but I have not yet answered.

Trust this finds you well.

Yours sincerely,
G.B. Pant

52. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna
5th May 1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I wrote to you a letter from Kumari Ashram which was about one of the vacancies in the Central Legislative Assembly on account of the resignation of Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha. As I told you Dalmia¹ would like to have the seat but on account of his many business connections he does not like to take the Congress ticket. He is, however, expected to support the Congress on most occasions. As you know he has been always helpful and there is a feeling in some of our workers that it is worth while leaving this seat uncontested. Personally I have confidence that he will support the Congress in most matters, although he does not like to stand as a full-fledged Congress candidate, which action of his will be open to comment by Congressmen and non-Congressmen alike for obvious reasons. I may also say that there may be some among Congressmen particularly those connected with Kisan Sabha who may disapprove of this course of action. Considering all these matters I should be obliged if you kindly advise me as to what we should do. We shall be soon considering the question of setting up candidates for the vacant seats and an early reply is solicited.

I have received copy of your letter to Assam and am in agreement with the views expressed therein.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

¹A leading industrialist who supported the nationalist cause.

53. *To C. Rajagopalachari*

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
7th May 1937

My dear Rajaji,

I received your telegram yesterday. I have seen the Press Note announcing the election results. I have got no materials here except the statement issued by the

All India Congress Committee which was distributed at the time of the Convention. From that it appears that the Congress has captured 713 seats in the Assembly and 65 in the Council. The Government figures regarding the Council tallies with the figures given by the All India Congress Committee but there is a difference of 17 in the figures of the Assembly. The fact remains that the Congress has secured only a minority if all the Provinces are considered. I do not know that it is possible to meet the Simla telegram by quoting figures only. We can of course argue with reference to the position of the various Assemblies that all the seats have not equal value or that the majority captured by others consists of various special interests and so forth. I do not know how far that will be effective. But I am trying to make out something which I will issue later when I get the figures of voting etc.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

54. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Camp Bardoli
11th May 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I had consulted Sjt. Bhulabhai about your recommendation for the nomination of Mr. Dalmia after I received your letter at Hudly. Mr. Bhulabhai is strongly opposed to the adoption of any candidate who is not prepared to stand on Congress ticket at the present juncture. I am also of the same opinion. We cannot afford to allow any by-election to go uncontested, particularly after the impasse created by the refusal of the Governors to give the required assurances. Every available seat due to any vacancy in the legislature should be captured by Congressmen in order to show that the Congress continues to hold greater confidence of the electorate in spite of the attitude of the Government. Besides, it is unwise or even dangerous to deplete the strength of the Congress in the Central Legislature at this juncture. We could not afford to accept Mr. Dalmia as our candidate even if he is now prepared to stand on Congress ticket. But if he is not so prepared, we cannot afford to make an exception in this case at this stage in spite of his assurance that he would stand by the Congress on almost all occasions. That is not a good enough position for the Congress. I have also received your letter dated 5.5.37 about the same matter this morning and I have given most anxious consideration to this matter. You will please excuse me for my not being able to accept your suggestion in this matter. You will please,

therefore, communicate to me the recommendation of your Committee for the nomination of candidates on Congress ticket as early as possible.

Bapu has come here yesterday afternoon and we both propose to go to Tithal tomorrow. Please keep me informed of your movements and what is happening in your Provincee.

Hope you are keeping good health.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

55. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Camp Tithal
Via Bulsar
19th May 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter received from one Mr. Devakinandan Prasad, a Congress M.L.A. of your Province, together with a copy of my reply to him. You will please deal with the matter.

I have heard nothing from you since we parted company at Allahabad. Dr. Khare of Nagpur has sent me papers regarding recommendation of nomination of a Congress candidate in the Central Assembly from Nagpur in his place. As these papers disclose a reference about you in your capacity as President of the Congress in the matter of inquiry against Mr. Poonamchand Ranka,¹ I am sending herewith copies of all the papers for your perusal. During the last Assembly elections when Dr. Khare stood as a candidate from Nagpur, he was opposed by a strong candidate named Dr. Paranjape. In order to secure the support of Mr. Poonamchand in that election, Dr. Khare appears to have promised to Poonamchand that in the event of his (Dr. Khare's) success in that election he would send him in his place to the Central Assembly. Jamnalalji was, I understand, a party to this arrangement, but Dr. Khare now wants to get out of this undertaking and yet wants to throw the responsibility on others. This is all that I gather from this correspondence. If it is true, that is not very creditable to the Congress in whose name all this is being done. After I dictated this letter I have just received a telegram from Dr. Khare recommending Mr. Deshmukh's candidature and I am wiring my approval to him.

Hope you are keeping good health.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

¹ A Maharashtra Congress leader who was active in the Civil Disobedience movement and Quit India movement. He was President of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and later its Secretary during the thirties.

Enclosures not included.

56. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Camp Tithal (Bulsar)
24.5.1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thanks for your letter of the 21st May. Sri Ghanshyamdasji came here on the 22nd and left this morning for Bombay, from where he sails for England on the 27th. He told us the gist of the conversation that you had with him and communicated your views to us. You did well in informing Jawaharlalji that he could stay away till about the 20th of June, without any difficulty. Nothing very unusual is going to happen during that period.

You must have seen Bapu's comments on Zetland's¹ speech. The Bombay Governor has in further interpreting that speech made it clear that they have no intention of giving any definite assurance. The Anglo-Indians and their Press have begun to speak with more or less one voice condemning the Congress attitude and threatening with dire consequences. The Muslim opinion is being worked up in the same direction. These things will go on, probably till the middle of July, when the Provincial Assemblies are likely to be called; that will probably be the time for a final burst-up. I am glad to notice that the Congress people on the whole have kept quiet. This dignified attitude of restraint reflects great credit upon our organisation. It would have been better still if Kripalaniji had resisted the temptation of issuing statements and entering into controversy with Muslim leaders.

I had received similar letter from Asaf Ali recommending financial assistance to the Assam Provincial Congress Committee and I am enclosing herewith my reply to him.

You don't write anything about your health in your letters. I hope your staying at your home will do you good.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

¹ Secretary of State for India in the 1930s.
Enclosure not included.

57. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Camp Tithal
(Via Bulsar)

28th May 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 25th instant today. The question that you have referred to me is a ticklish one. It involves the acceptance or the recognition by us of the interim ministry. The offer made to Sjt. Jagjivan Ram is, it appears, for a permanent post to serve on a Board to be appointed by the ministry which we have denounced. Sjt. Jagjivan Ram was, I understand, offered a seat in the ministry itself, which he refused and very rightly refused to accept. But to refuse to be a minister and then to agree to accept nomination by that very ministry as a member of the Board of Education or some such post, would be most illogical and awkward. I am, therefore, strongly of the opinion that you should try your best to convince Sjt. Jagjivan Ram of the inherent inconsistency and unnaturalness involved in the position.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

58. From Jawaharlal Nehru

Port Dickson (Malaya)
May 29, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have just received your letter of the 22nd May. I have been having a very strenuous time in Malaya where the public receptions have been overwhelming. In many ways, the Indian community here is very backward, specially so in politics. A comparison with the Chinese in almost every department of life and business is very much to the disadvantage of the Indians. My visit has shaken them up a great deal and created some stir all over the Malay Peninsula.

We are sailing on the 5th June from Penang. We reach Rangoon on the 8th and the same day we take a Scindia boat for Calcutta. This is a slow method of travelling and I will not reach Calcutta before the 13th June evening. But I want to have some experience of travelling by an Indian-owned liner. This also gives me an opportunity to visit Akyab and Chittagong. Probably I shall remain in Calcutta for a day or two as I want to consult some doctors about Indira. She

has been keeping rather poorly and managed to get a little hurt in a motor accident in Singapore. Fortunately, the injury was slight.

It has been difficult for me to follow developments in India. But my general impression is, and this is confirmed by your letter, that not very much is happening. Newspapers here and in Burma give little in the way of Indian news. And then I rush about so much that I hardly have time to read them. I am now, however, having some kind of rest for four days at a quiet sea-side place. We arrived here last night and even a day has made some difference and refreshed me.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

59. From Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Sir Kameshwar Singh

Darbhanga
The 3rd June 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many thanks for your letter of the 11th ultimo, regarding the complaint of Babu Basudeo Pd. Sinha of Tikapatti, Purnea. I regret to have made considerable delay in replying to this letter. He had also made a complaint to the Chief Manager and has written to me in this connection. He had ventilated the grievance complained of in the Press as well. We had an enquiry made into the subject matter of the complaint and the facts as reported by the Circle Manager are briefly as follows.

In the Bhowa Jungle in the district of Purnea which covers an area of 3 to 4 thousand bighas, there is thatching grass on an area of about 400 bighas. The grass is every year allowed to be cut on a contract system by such people of the locality as may like to have it. They are allowed to cut the grass on the express condition that after the cutting is over measurement would be made of the area from which a particular person would have cut the grass and that on the payment of the money at the prescribed rate the particular person would be entitled to take the grass. This year the rate fixed per bigha for the grass was Rs.6/8 instead of Rs.6 in the last year. It is reported to us that the people round about Tikapatti were told by the Kisan workers that this year the rate would have to be reduced by the Raj to Rs.3 per bigha. In fact when the cutting was over these people demanded the reduction in rate and insisted that the Raj should make realisation at the reduced rate of Rs.3 per bigha which the Circle Manager refused to do. After waiting for considerable time and having given due notice to the person concerned the Circle Manager had to remove the grass in respect of which payment was not made, by selling it to others at prescribed rate. The list sent by

B. Basudeo Pd. Sinha had not been checked or verified and I am not in a position to say one way or the other regarding its correctness. These persons did not appear to have been well advised in unnecessarily demanding the reduction of the rates. While I feel that these tenants have been put to some loss but in the circumstances of the case, I find myself helpless in the matter. It would appear that under these circumstances no other course was left to the Circle Manager and as the persons concerned were not prepared to perform their own part of the contract they could not be entitled to the grass. I hope you will realise my difficulty in such a situation.

Yours sincerely,
Kameshwar Singh

60. From J.B. Kripalani

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
4-6-1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am sending you herewith a cutting from *The Times of India* which was sent to me from Maharashtra. In the marked portion, Mr. Jinnah is reported to have said: "In 1935 he spent four or five weeks holding conferences with Babu Rajendra Prasad (then President of the Congress) and trying to get the Muslim viewpoint accepted at least by the Congress leaders, if not by the Hindu Mahasabha. But he did not succeed." This as you know is entirely misleading and false. If you think proper you may issue a statement. The gentleman who sent this cutting from Maharashtra enquired whether the facts were real as given by Mr. Jinnah.

The President is expected about the 13th or 14th. Do you think we should have a Working Committee meeting soon? Jamnalalji writes that if we want to have a meeting at Wardha in this month it should be arranged within the 20th and the 25th, for by the end of the month he will be going to Calcutta in connection with Kamal Nayan's marriage. You will please let me know what you would like in the matter so that as soon as the President comes I may keep before him the opinions.

How is your health at present? What is your programme?

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
J.B. Kripalani

61. From Mahatma Gandhi

June 6, 1937

Bhai Rajendra Prasad,

I have your letter. My views on Hindi-Urdu are clear. There must be a protest against the circular. But first meet Mr. Yunus.¹ Consult Dr. Mahmud.² See other prominent Muslims too. Obtain a pronouncement from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. It would be necessary to take Jawaharlal's opinion, too, in this matter. Were the Hindu members of the Bihar Cabinet in agreement with this circular? If so, why? Has any reason been given in the circular?

Have you read my interview that appeared in *The Times of India* regarding the acceptance of office? My views are stated there. However, we may tone down our conditions, but if even then they are not accepted we should refuse to form ministries. This is my firm opinion but it may be overlooked if the opinion and experience of the leaders of the six Provinces differ from mine.

I hope you are well.

With blessings,
Bapu

¹ & ²Prominent Muslim nationalist leaders, close to Gandhi.

62. From Prafulla Chandra Ghosh¹

ALL INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
(BENGAL)

249D, Bowbazar Street
Calcutta
12th June 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

After writing the above letter I saw in today's paper, published by a certain gentleman, a letter of Subhas Babu² in which there is a reference to Bapu and to yourself about the Kisan organisations. He writes, "About joining the Kisan movement I asked Mahatma Gandhi at Allahabad. He told me that there was no objection to Congress workers taking up this work in hand. (Of course it is needless to say that there should be no anti-Congress mentality.) Then I asked Rajendra Babu. His reply was that in Behar there was no antagonism between the Congress movement and Kisan movement, both are working together. Pandit

Jawaharlal's opinion is known to all, etc." This is being utilised as your opinion in favour of having separate Kisan Samitis. My conversation with you at Hudly and your report as a member of the Mass Contact Committee left no doubt in my mind that you do not favour formation of separate Kisan Samitis. Your idea is that Congress organisation should deal with Kisan problems. Kisan movements should be carried on under the banner of the Congress. Please let me know if I am correct, about which I have no doubt, and also kindly write the letter in such a way that I may publish your opinion, if need be.

I am writing to Bapu and also to Subhas Babu.

Yours sincerely,
Prafulla Ch. Ghosh

¹A noted Congress leader of West Bengal and its first Chief Minister after independence.

²Subhas Chandra Bose.

63. From Prafulla Chandra Ghosh

ALL INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
(BENGAL)

249D, Bowbazar Street
Calcutta
12th June 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I do not know whether you have read the Sahabad speech of Sj. Narendra Dev. It was a most undesirable speech from the Congress point of view and specially from our point of view. May I request you to state your opinion on the matter. I think the time is ripe when you should discuss these things in the Working Committee and settle something definitely. Organisations of separate Kisan Sabha will be suicidal for the Congress. We have waited long. In Bengal I am moving.

I want to write to you on another point which is rather personal. Sj. Gourhari Shom who was returned to the Bengal Assembly from Hughli on Congress ticket is dead. So there will be a by-election. The district Congress Committee, I am definitely informed, will nominate Sj. Dharendra Narayan Mukherjee, Vice-President of the District Committee. Out of 33 members of the executive which has been elected recently, one or at most two members may not vote for him. He was a student of mine in the Presidency College, from where he non-cooperated in 1921. He worked as a worker of Abhoyashram in Dacca in 1921. In 1921 he also went to jail. Then for family circumstances he had to start business. But all along he took interest in Congress work and was a habitual wearer of khadi,

taking keen interest in khadi work. He is a member of Khadi Mandal which does khadi work. In 1930, he was arrested in Arambag. In 1932, he was arrested in Arambag. In 1932 also he worked there according to the directions of Arambag leaders. If such a man is practically unanimously nominated by the District Committee, I see no reason why B.P.C.C. executive should set it aside. I do not say that they will, but they may. As you know, party considerations play a great part in all these matters in Bengal. Sj. Nripendra Chandra Banerjee is also a candidate. I wish I could persuade him not to stand. District workers in a body do not want him. Probably he will get only his own vote in the executive, even one more vote is highly doubtful. Under the circumstances I think he should not stand. The matter may ultimately go to you as a member of the Parliamentary Committee.

I may also add, when Sj. Gourhari Shom was contesting, Dhiren helped him not merely with money but also worked hard for him. Gourhari Babu was also a Vice-President. No other office-bearer of the district committee wants to stand; all of them will support Dhiren. Under the circumstances I think he is the best candidate for the district. I hope you are doing well.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Prafulla Ch. Ghosh

64. From Prafulla Chandra Ghosh

ALL INDIA VILLAGE INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
(BENGAL)

249-D, Bowbazar Street
Calcutta
2-7-1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am sending to you a copy of the letter which I have sent to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C., regarding the formation of separate Kisan Sabhas. I think you should settle the policy definitely from the Working Committee. I have no doubt in my mind that such separate organisations will do more harm than good to the country. I feel very strongly on the point, so I have been moving. You can do the needful in the matter and not I. I have not got that position in the Congress. So I appeal to you to do your best in the matter.

I have not sent your statement to the Press.

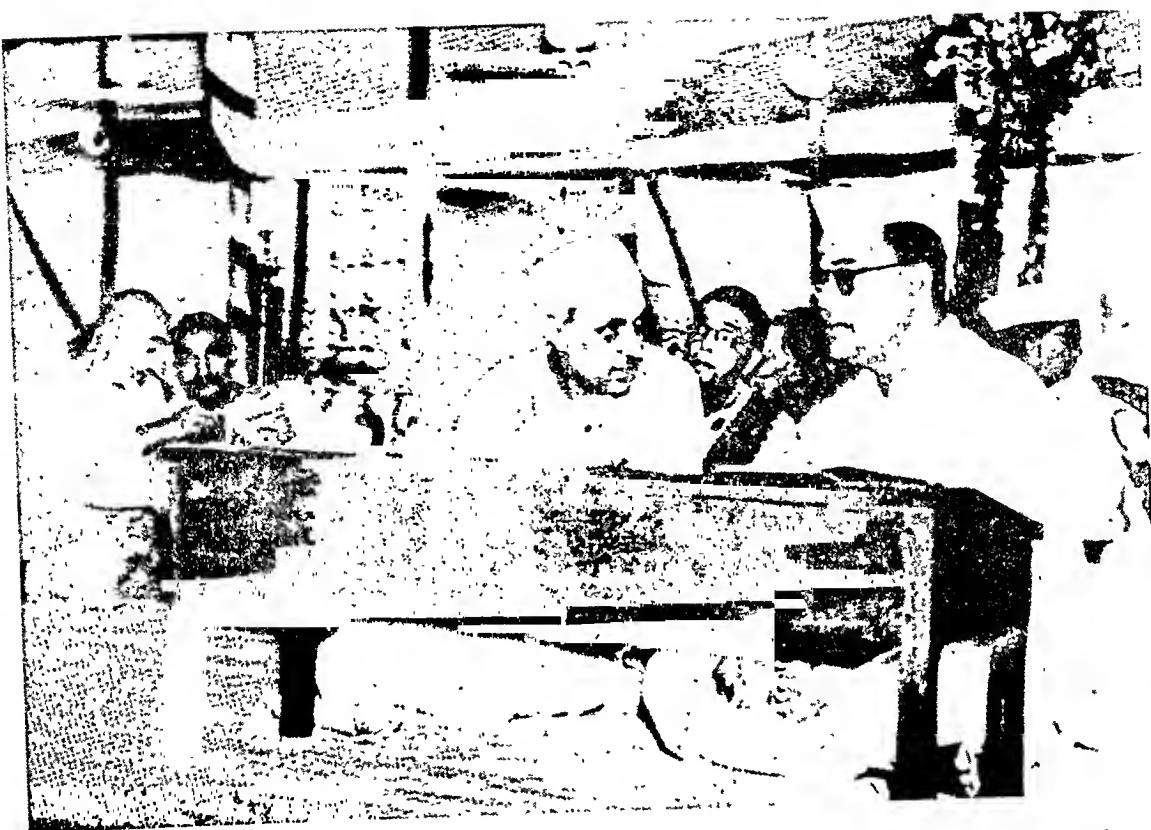
I hope you are doing well.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
P.C. Ghosh



Rajendra Prasad with Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel



Congress President Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru with Subhas Chandra Bose, Rajendra Prasad, and
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan at the Lucknow Congress session

65. *From Pyarelal*

Segaon
July 11, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Herewith is a letter that Bapu has received from the Secretaries of the Bodh Gaya Defence League and Bapu's reply thereto. Bapu has asked me to send them to you for your information. If you feel like saying anything after going through the correspondence, please do so.

There was hardly any time to read and talk—you left so suddenly. I would have liked to have your view on the theories propounded and the places adumbrated in those two volumes that are with you, and to know how far they are borne out by your own experiences in Bihar.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Pyarelal

P.S. Heard just now news about the demise of Jayaprakash's father. I hereby convey condolence to J.P.

See Appendix for enclosures.

66. *From B. Shiva Rao*

"Hyde Vale Cottage"
Simla S.W.
12th July 1937

Dear Rajendra Babu,

My warmest congratulations to you on the decision of the Working Committee. Now that the Congress party will be in office in six Provinces I want to remind you of the conversations we had at Hudly in April last. I do not feel that the Congress can do much in the Provinces unless a determined assault is made on army expenditure at the Centre.

I am enclosing herewith the summary of a debate which took place in the Council of State in March this year on Kunzru's¹ resolution to replace British by Indian troops. You will observe that the Commander-in-Chief said that whenever any proposal was made in the past for removing British troops from a particular place, the Local Government concerned protested against it. He added that it is for the new Provincial Governments to say whether they want the support of the British soldiers or not. I feel that the Congress Governments in the six Provinces should lose no time in saying publicly that they do not want the

British soldiers for the maintenance of law and order. Since the number of British troops for internal security purposes in India is quite large, the withdrawal of those troops should mean considerable relief to the exchequer. Secondly, I think that Congress Finance Ministers, in their budgets, should point out that little can be done to carry out the constructive programme of the Congress unless Britain pays to us the difference in the cost between British troops and the same number of Indian troops. The Commander-in-Chief estimates this at eight crores per year. But, of course, it will be less if British internal security troops are withdrawn. As I told you at Hudli, it seems to me to be an essential move from the Congress side, and the Government of India cannot resist such a demand for long.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. Shiva Rao

¹H.N. Kunzru—a moderate Congressman and a frontline legislator in the Central Legislative Assembly at the time.

Enclosure:

Summary of debate in Council of State on 18 March 1937 on Pandit H.N. Kunzru's resolution for continuous replacement of British by Indian troops

In the course of the debate, Mr. Kunzru pointed out that there are at present about 60,000 British soldiers and 145,000 Indian soldiers, a ratio of 1 British to 2.5 Indian soldiers. In 1921, he said, Lord Rawlinson (the then Commander-in-Chief) had accepted a resolution for carrying out a gradual and prudent reduction of the British to Indian troops. The Defence Sub-Committee of the first Round Table Conference also considered the question of Indianisation. The Rt. Hon'ble J.H. Thomas, who was Chairman of the Sub-Committee, observed: "You cannot talk of Indianisation without keeping in mind that it presupposes a reduction of British troops; that is obviously a part of it."

Quoting Lord Rawlinson's difficulties Mr. Kunzru said that the army in India is divided into three sections: In the cavalry troops in 1921 there was 1 British soldier to 6.7 Indian soldiers. In the field army the proportion was 1 to 2.7. But in the internal security troops there were 4 British to 3 Indian soldiers. Lord Rawlinson wrote in his diary: "Now that we have decided to trust the Indians and lead them to self-government, we cannot justify an army of occupation." (This reference was to internal security troops.)

The Simon Commission, dealing with internal security troops, said: "In the troops earmarked for internal security the proportion is about 8 British to 7 Indian soldiers."

Mr. Kunzru proceeded to say that there are at present five British cavalry regiments in India each of which remains in the country for five years, so that on

an average one cavalry regiment leaves India every year. There are 43 battalions of British infantry of which about 3 leave India every year. Therefore, Mr. Kunzru's argument was that the lower personnel of the army could be completely Indianised in about 15 years.

The Commander-in-Chief in his reply admitted that the substitution of Indian for British troops in this country would produce a large saving. His own estimate was that it would be in the neighbourhood of 8 crores. He reminded the House that His Majesty's Government was already making a contribution of 2 crores towards the cost of Indian defence and contended that this contribution could not continue if all British troops were removed from this country. At the same time, the Commander-in-Chief put forward three main arguments in opposing the resolution:

- (1) The Commander-in-Chief is ultimately responsible to the Government of India for the peace and tranquillity of the country.
- (2) The army in India is composed of British soldiers led by British officers and Indian soldiers led by British officers. This combination has worked extremely well so far. There is no ratio laid down for the purpose of maintaining a mathematical proportion between the number of British and Indian troops, in India. In war the brigades are made up in the proportion of three Indian units to one British unit; but for internal security purposes it is true that the number of British troops as compared with Indian troops is higher.

With regard to the proposal for the reduction in the number of British troops, while there is no early prospect of any further substitution of Indian for British troops, it is possible to reduce the number of British troops from changes in organisation and as mechanisation increases. The Commander-in-Chief also referred to recruiting difficulties in Britain which may cause fluctuations in the strength of British units overseas, including India.

- (3) The Commander-in-Chief also referred to the fact that any proposal to move even a single company of British troops from a station anywhere in India met with the most vehement opposition from the Local Government concerned. On the eve of the introduction of Provincial Autonomy he did not desire to deprive the ministers in advance of the bulwark on which the Local Governments have so far placed such implicit trust. Therefore, he said, "Let us wait and see, and let us not by any vote that the House may take today spread abroad the impression that the Provincial Governments of the future are going to be weakened in any way in discharging the onerous duties that lie before them."

Tribunal on certain questions in regard to defence expenditure

A Tribunal was appointed in 1933 on certain questions in regard to defence

expenditure in dispute between the Government of India and the War Office and the Air Ministry.

The members of the Tribunal were:

Sir Robert Randolph Garran, K.C., K.C.M.G., Chairman.
 The Rt. Hon. Viscount Dunedin, P.C., G.C.V.O.
 The Hon. Sir Shadi Lal, Kt.
 The Hon. Sir Shah Muhammad Sulaiman, Kt.
 The Rt. Hon. Lord Tomlin, P.C.
 Mr. F.E. Grist, India Office } Joint Secretaries
 Mr. G.D. Roseway, War Office }

The Terms of Reference of the Tribunal were:

(1) To consider and report whether there should continue to be contributions by India towards the recruiting and training expenses at home of the British Army in India; and to report the basis on which the contributions, if continued, should be calculated.

(2) To examine India's claim that a contribution should be made from Imperial revenues towards military expenditure from Indian revenues, and to report the basis on which any contribution approved should be assessed.

(3) To examine the War Office claim that India should pay a direct contribution towards the cost of the Regular and Supplementary Reserves, and to report the basis on which any contribution approved should be assessed.

(4) To consider whether the Sea Transport Contribution paid by the War Office to India should be continued or modified after 31st March 1932.

(5) To examine and report *mutatis mutandis* on such of the questions raised in the preceding paragraphs as are relevant to the contribution at present paid from Indian revenues in respect of Royal Air Force personnel in India.

At the outset the Tribunal decided that it was not competent to suggest that the British Government should act in a spirit of generosity or liberality towards India in this matter. The view of the Tribunal was that the question of generosity is not related to any principle of fairness or equity.

Equally the Tribunal did not think it necessary to pay any special attention to the fact that India is in a position of dependence upon Britain. Nor in the opinion of the Tribunal was political sentiment in India a relevant factor.

On all these above matters the Tribunal was unanimous. But on the question whether India's capacity to pay should be considered a factor, a majority of the Tribunal, with the exception of Sir S.M. Sulaiman, took the view that this too was not a relevant consideration.

Another factor which was placed before the Tribunal was the ratio of military expenditure to revenue. Figures were placed before the Tribunal to show that India's military expenditure bore a far higher proportion to the total public revenue than in any other part of the Empire. It was suggested that a proportion of 20% of the total revenue should be fixed as a maximum and India should be

relieved by a contribution from Imperial revenues of all defence expenditure over that maximum. On this point also a majority of the Tribunal refused to record it as coming within the scope of its enquiry. It was not denied that the proportion of India's defence expenditure to net revenue was 29% as against 22%.

India's grounds for claiming relief from Imperial revenues were the following:

(1) That the Army in India serves an Imperial as well as an Indian purpose, and is always available and sometimes used for purposes other than the defence of India.

(2) That other parts of the Empire do not contribute to the same extent to the defence of the Empire.

(3) That the Imperial Government has a predominant voice in determining the cost and the organisation of the Army in India.

A majority of the Tribunal considered that the grounds in respect of which a contribution should be made are the following two only:

(1) That the Army in India is a force, ready in an emergency to take the field at once, which does not exist elsewhere in the Empire, which is specially available for immediate use in the East, and which has on occasion been so used.

(2) That India is a training ground for active service such as does not exist elsewhere in the Empire.

The India Office tentatively suggested several alternative formulae on which a contribution might be based, viz.,

(1) A fixed percentage of India's total expenditure on defence, say, one-half, about £18,000,000 per annum (suggested by some members of a Sub-Committee of the First Indian Round Table Conference); or, alternatively, some lower percentage.

(2) The extra cost of maintaining the British troops in India over the cost of maintaining a corresponding number of Indian troops, estimated at £10,000,000.

(3) The existing defence expenditure of India relating to the cost of British troops, say, £16,000,000; or, alternatively, a percentage of this.

(4) The excess of India's defence expenditure over a certain percentage of India's assessable revenue.

Sir Shadi Lal was not satisfied with the view adopted by a majority of his colleagues. He wrote:

"The Tribunal, while precluded from calling in question the scale on which the defence forces in India are maintained with reference to the duties allotted to them, are competent to consider whether some of the duties allotted to, or performed by, the military forces in India are the concern, not of India, but of the Imperial Government; and whether the Army in India serves, *inter alia*, purposes which are either wholly Imperial or partly Imperial and partly Indian. It is mainly, though not exclusively, with reference to these Imperial duties and purposes that India's claim to a contribution from the Imperial exchequer is to be determined."

It is true that India's military expenditure imposes a heavy burden upon her

resources and prevents her from providing money for extending education and promoting other 'nation-building' activities. It appears that the ratio of the military expenditure of India to her public revenue is higher than that in any other part of the Empire or in any foreign country. The statistics supplied to us also show that in respect of certain Colonies, where British troops are stationed, the Imperial Government have adopted the rule that the cost to be levied from them should not exceed one-fifth of the total assessable revenue of the Colony concerned.

These and other matters of a like nature do not, however, logically lead to the conclusion that the British Government are liable to make a contribution to India. There are considerations of high policy which come within the cognizance of the executive authorities, but cannot sustain the decision of a Tribunal, which, though not exactly judicial in character, is nevertheless guided by judicial and logical principles. Confining myself to strictly logical considerations, I hold that India has made out a strong case for a contribution from the Imperial revenues. The troops maintained by India, apart from the service rendered by them to that country, are of considerable value to Great Britain and the British Empire on the following grounds:

(1) They constitute a reserve of experienced officers and men who are located at one of the most important centres of the Imperial interests and are available to the British Government for Imperial purposes. They are not a force having merely a moral effect, as the Expeditionary Force in Great Britain has been so far in relation to India, but a well-equipped and experienced Army which is ready to take action at once, and can be quickly despatched to a theatre of war to serve an Imperial interest. Since 1856-57, the British and Indian troops maintained by India have been employed by the Imperial Government on no fewer than fourteen campaigns outside the boundaries of India. It is significant that there has not been a single occasion, since the assumption by the Crown of the direct charge of the administration of India, when their services were requisitioned by the Imperial Government but were not placed at the disposal of that Government. India has been treated, to use the language of the late Lord Salisbury, as 'an English barrack in the Oriental seas'. The usefulness of the troops in India to the Imperial Government has been enhanced by the fact that the centre of Imperial interests has, since the Great War, shifted to the East where an Army consisting of seasoned men having experience of Eastern conditions and located at a comparatively short distance from the possible scenes of operations is of incalculable advantage to the Empire. Without it, the Imperial Government would have to strengthen the British garrison in the East or to maintain a reserve for Imperial purposes. In either case, the Imperial Government would have to incur considerable expenses which is now saved by reason of the troops in India being available for an emergency.

(2) Service in India affords the British troops valuable opportunities of active service in frontier wars. The experience thus gained in India tends to increase the general efficiency of the British Army and to enhance its value for purposes of

war. The War Office, while admitting the benefit derived by the British Army from 'the experience of the comparatively large British element in the Army in India' seeks to set off against it the benefit conferred upon the Indian Army 'by the admixture of British troops and by the service at home and in the Colonies of the remainder of the British Army from which India's British troops are drawn'. But this latter benefit is of a comparatively trifling value.

(3) The Army in India is maintained and employed for hostilities on its frontiers. As admitted by responsible British politicians, these hostilities are sometimes dictated by Imperial interest and should, at least partially, be treated as an Imperial purpose. It is hardly fair that India alone should shoulder the whole burden of the frontier wars and that the Imperial exchequer should not bear its share in the cost of the Army required for such hostilities.

(4) The possibilities of a war with a great power cannot be excluded from consideration in determining the strength, organisation and equipment of the Army in India, though it is admitted that such a war be predominantly, if not wholly, an Imperial concern.

(5) The British troops in India protect and promote, *inter alia*, British commercial and financial interests. They also maintain British supremacy in India, which is a British interest of the first magnitude.

(6) The frontiers of India are, as admitted by the War Office, not only frontiers of India, but also Imperial frontiers of the first importance; and their protection is an Imperial, no less than an Indian interest.

These factors establish a strong case for the grant of a contribution, though they are not susceptible of exact mathematical evaluation. There are, however, cogent reasons for relating the subsidy to the cost of the British troops on the Indian Establishment. This cost, imposing, as it does, a very heavy burden of nearly sixteen million pounds per annum on India, would furnish ample justification for the payment of a substantial amount. The logical method of assessing the contribution would be that, as British troops are kept in India, partly at any rate for Imperial purposes, the contribution should be related to their cost.

When India acquires complete control over her military affairs and the Indian Ministry responsible to the Indian Legislature is invested with authority to determine the strength and the composition of the Army needed for her defence, the question of the continuance or discontinuance of the contribution from Imperial revenues may require reconsideration."

Sir S.M. Sulaiman also in a separate note agreed with the conclusions of Sir Shadi Lal. He said:

"The economic and financial conditions of India, the heavy burden of her military expenditure particularly in comparison with other parts of the Empire and even foreign powers, some Imperial purposes served by the Army in India, the Imperial dangers that it averts and the assistance that it affords to the Empire as a Reserve, are relevant and important when examining India's claim for a

contribution. The claim is based on the following principal grounds:

- (1) Great Britain has great political and financial interests in India;
- (2) there is an Imperial aspect of the defence of India's frontier which is of vital importance to the Empire;
- (3) the defence of India is of great importance in the general scheme of Imperial defence;
- (4) the Army in India is an asset in the military strength of the Empire and has been used as a reserve on numerous occasions in the past;
- (5) the Imperial Government exercise a powerful influence on questions of military policy and organisation in India;
- (6) more favourable treatment in the matter of defence expenditure is accorded to other parts of the Empire than to India;
- (7) the Indian revenues expended on defence bear a very high proportion to the total revenues and to funds available for social services.

As regards (1), while no doubt India has derived very great benefits from its connection with England, on the other hand India opens a vast field for British enterprise and enriches the Mother Country by her trade. India pays no tribute to England, but large sums derived from Indian revenues are expended in England for interest on public debt and the pensions of retired public servants and soldiers, and in purchasing stores, armaments, railway materials, etc. There are thus mutual advantages in the connection between Britain and India.

As regards (2), from the physical or geographical point of view India is not specially vulnerable, although admittedly it has hostile tribesmen as her neighbours. These, however, are not a serious menace. In any case, the Frontier of India is a Frontier of the Empire. It is one of the points where the British Empire may be open to attack by a great military power, and the mere fact that India happens to lie in this part of the Empire is no reason for making her bear the whole cost of the defence of this entrance to the Empire.

As regards (3), India's large and ready army is a source of great strength to the Empire and its location helps to promote British interests throughout the East. With a frequent chance of active service in minor frontier affairs, India furnishes a unique military training ground for the British Army, and as with the shifting of the focus of the world unrest, the centre of Imperial strategy has moved eastward, the potential value of the army in India has enormously increased.

As regards (4), it is clear that when conditions in India are normal, troops can be spared for operations outside India without serious risk and the Indian Army, therefore, serves as a great reserve of forces for the Empire; in fact troops from India have taken part in practically every campaign in which British troops have been engaged since the Mutiny, and no request for the loan of troops has ever been refused by India. Thus the Indian Army may be regarded as available for averting to some extent the major as well as the minor, or purely local, danger, and provides a force which can be promptly despatched to any quarter in which military assistance may be required in an emergency.

As regards (5), as the British troops in India are closely linked with units on the

British Establishment and form an integral part of the British Army, their organisation, training, equipment and rates of pay are dependent on War Office standards. Although the Indian Army is maintained primarily for the needs of India, there can be no doubt that in the event of an Imperial emergency His Majesty's Government, after considering the advice of the Committee for Imperial Defence, would have the final word in the disposal of these forces.

As regards (6), as compared with the strength and cost of the Defence Forces maintained by the various component parts of the British Empire, India bears a disproportionate part of the burden of the cost of Imperial defence.

In certain Colonies it has been decided that no more than a fixed percentage of revenue should be recovered in respect of the cost of the defence forces provided by His Majesty's Government. India's contribution to the cost of the British Navy is fair when compared with the amounts borne by the Dominions and Colonies.

As regards (7), military expenditure in India and India's internal and external debt have grown considerably. There is a great disproportion between the revenues devoted to military expenditure and those available for social services, and the burden of military expenditure is unbearably heavy on a comparatively poor and backward country like India with the result that her beneficial services are being starved on account of it.

It would not be suitable to equate the contribution with the whole cost of the British troops in India. It might be related in some way to the cost of the British troops or, alternatively, the total military expenditure might be limited to a certain fixed proportion of the public revenue. Either a fixed share of the costs of the British troops in India or the excess over a fixed maximum percentage of Indian revenues would be a fair and suitable way of fixing the contribution and would furnish the required basis of assessment, but the fixing of the exact amount or share or percentage is a matter of high policy."

67. From some members of Bihar Legislative Assembly

Patna
19th July 1937

Sir,

We the following members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly representing the depressed classes beg respectfully to submit the following facts for your due consideration:

I. That the Press report of the selection of Babu Jaglal Choudhury, M.L.A., as a member of the Bihar Cabinet on behalf of the depressed classes has come to us as a great surprise and is an event which we never anticipated nor was any indication given to us that this is going to happen.

2. That it is very well known to you that a meeting of the depressed class M.L.A.s was held on the 14th February 1937 at Patna at which Babu Jaglal Choudhury presided. The meeting unanimously passed the following resolution, a copy of which was duly forwarded to the Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee and was also published not only in the Bihar Press but all over the country:

"The Depressed Classes Party will be a party within the Congress party in the Bihar Legislative Assembly and the following gentlemen will be the office-bearers of the party:

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Leader | Babu Jagjivan Ram |
| Dy. Leader | Babu Jaglal Choudhury |
| Secretaries | Dr. Raghunandan Prasad |
| | Babu Ram Prasad |
| Whips | Babu Ram Basawan Ram |
| | Babu Sheonandan Ram |
| | Babu Sukhari Ram" |

3. That we have times and oft affirmed our confidence in the leadership of Babu Jagjivan Ram and there has been absolutely no change in the position even now.

4. That it is the recognised principle of democracy and party system of Government that the leader of a group or groups that compose a party is selected to represent that group in the Cabinet with a view to command the allegiance of and to inspire confidence in the members of that group or groups. But in the present case, although Babu Jaglal Choudhury technically answers the definition of a depressed class, he is not our leader and we cannot willingly accept his leadership. He has identified himself more with other programmes than with the depressed class work and, therefore, he cannot command our confidence and allegiance.

5. That the leadership of Babu Jagjivan Ram of the depressed classes has been undisputed and that it has always been taken for granted that if the Congress Ministry was formed, Babu Jagjivan Ram will be taken in the Cabinet to represent the depressed classes. But contrary to all expectations and assurances, the position has been changed without any reference to ourselves, which has greatly pained us.

6. Under the circumstances, it is natural for us to feel that those responsible for the selection of the Cabinet have failed to enter into our genuine feelings by disregarding our sentiments and flouting our considered opinion and have been more anxious to comply with the form than the spirit of the matter.

7. We are of the opinion that if the authorities responsible for the nomination of the ministry fought shy of taking our acknowledged leader in the Cabinet, we well might do without any representation at all in the Cabinet instead of allowing the impression to remain on the public mind that we have a representative in the

Cabinet who enjoys the confidence of the depressed classes.

8. It is no secret what Babu Jagjivan Ram has done or is doing for the depressed classes and although comparisons are odious, we can say without fear that Babu Jagjivan Ram is far too well known in our communities than Babu Jaglal Choudhury who has never completely identified with our cause and has done nothing for us although he has been in the Congress for the last so many years. It is very well known how the depressed class members have resisted the temptation put forward by the interim ministry and spurned the offers made to many of us, only under the advice and guidance of our leader Babu Jagjivan Ram. And this fact has been recognised and appreciated by Mahatma Gandhiji, Sardar Patel and other leaders including your goodself. But on top of everything when we have stood the ordeal and proved our unflinching allegiance to the leadership of Mahatma Gandhiji and the Congress, we are being so unjustly treated, so much so that we have not even been considered worthy of being consulted in a matter that vitally affects us.

There are numerous other points from which the nomination of the depressed class minister has been highly objectionable and unjustifiable but we consider it needless to go into their detailed discussion. But we fervently appeal to you to consider the facts and even now to nominate Babu Jagjivan Ram in the Cabinet and thus earn the gratitude of our communities which have great hopes from you and which have been greatly agitated over the shock that they have received on account of this nomination.

We are,

Yours faithfully,

1. Karu Dusadh, M.L.A.
2. Keshwa Ram, M.L.A.
3. (*Illegible*)
4. Ram Basawan, M.L.A.
5. Shivanandan Ram, M.L.A.
6. (*Illegible*)
7. Ram Parsad, M.L.A.

68. From Mahadev Desai

Maganwadi
Wardha
20-7-37

My dear Rajen Babu,

I do not know where this will find you. Will you please let me know by wire—in case this should be in your hands by Friday morning—whether you have any objection to the article on Ministerial Salaries going in. The other article you will

like, as I know you must have liked the one in the last issue.
What a terrible train disaster!

Yours,
Mahadev

69. To Shah Mohammad Masood, Honorary Secretary, Central Zamindars' Association, Patna

Sadaquat Ashram (Patna)
20th July 1937

Dear Sir,

I have received your letter dated 16th July 1937 forwarding to me copy of a resolution passed by the Executive Committee of the Central Zamindars' Association. When the Kisan Enquiry Committee was appointed we wrote to the Bihar Landholders' Association and other organisations which were known to us and to a large number of individual Zamindars to cooperate with the Committee and to help it in finding a solution of the many problems confronting the Kisans and the Zamindars. There is no denying that the prolonged depression has created a most acute situation and we were anxious to bring about a settlement as smoothly as possible. Unfortunately, however, our letters were not even acknowledged, not to speak of cooperation on the part of the Zamindars. When the Committee started its work and began touring for collecting evidence we made it a point to inform the Zamindars of the locality. I regret that the Zamindars as a class, barring a few exceptions, did not come and participate in the enquiry. In many places their agents used to attend and watch but did not assist the Committee in any way. The Committee has collected a large mass of evidence and its report is being drafted and will be soon available. Zamindars may not blame us as cooperation has been refused by them. It is proposed to approach them once again when the report is ready to accept and give effect to the recommendations of the Committee. We are anxious to prevent bitterness of feeling as much as possible. But there are certain difficulties which are inherent in the situation and it is beyond us to control either the Zamindars or the Kisans unless an amicable settlement can be reached. The Congress will continue to strive for such amicable settlement.

As regards the alleged no-rent campaign and the terrorist attitude of the tenants and the obstruction created by the tenants in the Zamindars' *bakhist* lands mentioned in your Resolution I need only state that the Congress has not sanctioned any such campaign. If it is being carried on by anybody the Congress takes no responsibility. But may I point out that the economic condition of many Kisans today in many places is such that it does not need a campaign to stop payment of rent. In many places they are simply unable to pay. Your Association must be aware and we shall be obliged if you could furnish us with the

information about the number of holdings sold for arrears of rent since the depression commenced. The problem of *bakhsat* land has assumed a serious importance on account of their recent sales. I agree with you that efforts should be made to prevent further estrangement and we shall be ready to offer help in this direction. It becomes, however, very difficult when there is non-cooperation on one side.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

70. To Mahadev Desai

Sadaquat Ashram (Patna)
21st July 1937

My dear Mahadev Bhai,

I have received Ramnarain Babu's telegram to Bapu and also Bapu's reply to him. Babu Ramnarain Sinha is a sincere worker and has suffered and sacrificed much but sometimes he takes a view which is [untenable] and he works himself up to a pitch of feeling when he may be said even to lose his balance. One such instance we have had now. He is not in the Provincial Assembly but he is a member of the Central Assembly. He expressed to me very strongly that one minister should be appointed from Chhotanagpur. We found, however, after considering the matter minutely and carefully that it would create complications to have more than four ministers and with four ministers there was no room for a separate minister from Chhotanagpur. But Babu Ramnarain Sinha went further and he felt that from Chhotanagpur he was the person who should be appointed. He considers himself the best fitted person in the Province by reason of his honesty, boldness, sacrifice and experience to hold the position of a minister. As we could not agree he is very angry. If I could only show you the letter which he has written, you could read his temper. We have had no trouble with the members in selecting the ministry but in the background of this selection considerations have been present which I wish I could avoid. However, I am hoping that all will be right.

You will have noticed that we have appointed 'Shri Jaglal Choudhury, a Harijan, as one of the four ministers. For various reasons we preferred him to Shri Jagivan Ram. This caused some flutter amongst Harijan members but it has settled down now.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

71. From Vallabhbhai Patel

Poona 21-7-37

My dear Rajen Babu,

Your letter of the 18th was received by me here today. You have asked me to issue instructions about several questions which are obviously delicate and difficult. Maulana has already left for Allahabad via Wardha. This morning he must have met Bapu and in the afternoon he proposes to proceed to Allahabad. It was, therefore, not possible to consult him on your letter which was received after he left. You have not given your own opinion in the matter.

However I shall consider these questions and send you my opinion soon after going to Bombay. I intend to leave Poona tomorrow.

I saw your report about the Ministry in Orissa. There is no need to have a Muslim there as the population is only 2 p.c. particularly when no suitable candidate is available.

Nariman's¹ matter continued to give us trouble since Wardha. Bapu advised me to accept his offer to Nariman for inquiry and I agreed. I issued a statement accepting the offer for inquiry as advised by Bapu and he instead of accepting the offer of inquiry by independent Tribunal turned round and publicly charged me with having reopened the unfortunate controversy which had been settled and happily ended by the Working Committee.

Bapu is now pursuing the matter. He is in correspondence with him. Our work here is more difficult than the other five Provinces, but we are trying to do our best. The Muslim question is also difficult as the Muslim League under Jinnah's leadership is the strongest here.

What a terrible railway accident! Such accidents can easily be avoided with a little care.

I hope things are progressing well on your side.

Yours sincerely,
Valiabhbhai

¹ K.F. Nariman, a Congress leader of Bombay. He was Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Bombay Congress in October 1934 at which Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected President.

72. To Dr. Choithram Gidwani, Sindh P.C.C.

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
21st July 1937

My dear Doctor Choithram,

I have received your telegram dated 19th July asking for reconsideration of the decision to have Parliamentary Secretaries in Orissa on the ground that in a deficit province this was considered extravagant. The matter has never been

considered from the point of view of expenses but it has always been felt that Parliamentary Secretaries would be necessary because the ministers will need their assistance in defending the Govt. policy or otherwise in the legislature where their presence will be helpful also in formulating policies. The question of extravagance does not arise, as salary of ministers has been considerably reduced. I believe the salary of Congress Secretaries also will be very much less than that of the Secretaries appointed by other parties in power. In Orissa they were thinking of giving Rs. 100 or Rs. 150 per month to Secretaries. I would like to know what they have fixed in Sindh. I am, however, forwarding a copy of your telegram to Shri Biswanath Das, the leader of the Parliamentary Party of the Congress in Orissa.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

73. From Jawaharlal Nehru

Allahabad
21st July 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your letter about Orissa affairs. I have been wanting to write to you for the last four days about a curious situation that has arisen here but as the urgency seemed to pass, I delayed writing. I shall now put you briefly in possession of the facts.

During the general elections in U.P. there was not much conflict between the Congress and the Muslim League. It was the desire of both parties to avoid a conflict as much as possible and to accommodate each other. In the early stages of the election campaign a number of Muslims who were more or less Congressmen were doubtful if they would stand on behalf of the Congress or the League. If they had been pressed to do so they would have probably stood on the Congress ticket. But as there was no such pressure they drifted gradually to the League side under the vague impression that it was much a curious affair. There were some fairly good and old Congressmen in it, there were hopeless reactionaries and there were middling people who drifted hither and thither.

As we looked upon the election campaign it was a tussle with the Agriculturist Party which was a wholly government party of big Zamindars. The League also was opposing them and so inevitably our opposition to the League weakened. We did not want to split the forces opposed to pure reaction.

I did not know much about all this and had practically nothing to do with it. As

the election campaign developed and our strength became apparent, some Muslims came to us wanting to stand on our ticket. But they were not obviously desirable from the Congress point of view and we allowed matters to drift, although we began to regret not having run more Congress Muslim candidates.

There was no kind of arrangement between the U.P. Congress and the League, but a kind of convention developed. In one or two instances we opposed League candidates and came near to success.

During the election campaign, the outstanding and most powerful reactionary elements seemed to gain the upper hand. Relations between the U.P. Congress and the U.P. League became more strained. During the convention at Delhi this matter was discussed by us with the Jamiat leaders who had so far supported the League fully but who were now worried at the reactionary turn it was taking.

After the convention the U.P. League Board became even more reactionary and its president, the Raja of Salempur, joined the interim ministry. This created a crisis in the League which resulted in the resignation of many members from its Parliamentary Board. Among those who resigned was Maulana Husain Ahmad. Most of those who resigned were not M.L.A., but one M.L.A., Hafiz Ibrahim, also resigned and formally joined the Congress party. There were at least four or five other M.L.A.s in the League group who were keen on joining the Congress party but who for various reasons refrained at the time.

During the months that followed, there was much controversy between the two groups of Muslims—those of the League and those who had resigned and their sympathisers who were supporting the Congress. Bitterness grew, and the success of the Congress appeal to the Muslim masses irritated the Muslim League. So matters stood and the distance between the League and the Congress went on widening. This came to a head in the recent Bundelkhand election. This election, although we lost it, was an eye-opener to everybody. All manner of Muslims from Maulvis and members of the Jamiat to young students trooped up, often uninvited, to help the Congress candidate. The reactionary methods of the League irritated them and they grew quite enthusiastic in their opposition to it. We lost the election for two reasons—(1) the cry of 'Islam in Danger', and (2) bribery on an extensive scale. Many voters came to us and told us that they would vote for the Congress candidate if we paid them a little more than the other side was paying. There was a third reason also—the strength of caste feeling. Quite 25% of the voters were Malhan Rajputs and the Muslim League candidate belonged to the same brotherhood. Their Biradari decided to support him and threatened to punish any member who did not do so. People were made to take the oath on the Quran. This solid block of votes went wholly against us almost without a single exception. But for it, we had a comfortable majority. There was also shameless impersonation in regard to women voters, the same persons voting again and again.

In spite of all this the election was a most hopeful sign of a growing political consciousness among the Muslims. All our workers are sure that if the election was held again in the same area we would win. Last time we only put in about ten

days' intensive effort. We got the real rural vote of the peasant, but the residents of the qasbas were far more difficult. It was interesting to find that the Muslim peasant was not carried away by the cry of 'Islam in Danger'. When asked why he was voting for the Congress he confessed frankly that he did so because he expected the Congress to reduce his tent.

Generally speaking, therefore, our position has been considerably strengthened by the election. We have discovered to our pleasant surprise that there is a strong band of Muslim workers all over the Province who are determined to fight reaction and to support the Congress. Quite a number of the leading lights of the Jamiat have helped us enthusiastically. They were disgusted by the tactics of the League's supporters in Bundelkhand. We have collected a large number of leaflets and posters issued by the League and they are instructive reading.

It is true that we have still to face a solid mass of reaction and the cry of religion carried off many people. It is also true that bribery is rampant during Muslim election. The voters are very poor and are smaller in number. We cannot, and will not, compete in these corrupt practices. Still the outlook is hopeful.

I have, without intending to do so, discussed at some length the Bundelkhand election. Still it will help you to form a background.

Towards the end of June, a little before the Working Committee meeting, the U.P. Muslim League leaders, Khaliquazzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan, made an approach towards the Congress. This had obviously some connection with the possibility of forming ministries. They pointed out that last March their Parliamentary Board had offered cooperation to the U.P. Congress party on the basis of the 'Wardha Programme' as laid down by the Working Committee and were prepared to work under the discipline of the Congress party. You will remember the Working Committee resolution on the Congress policy in the legislatures passed at the Wardha meeting prior to the convention. It was not clear whether the Muslim League Board accepted the whole resolution or only the particular items of the legislative programme. If the former, then they accepted the Congress policy 100% including Independence, fighting the Act, Constituent Assembly, etc., etc.

I knew nothing about all this, nor did Maulana, till it was vaguely hinted at Wardha early this month by Pantji. But it was all very vague and I did not like the look of this angling for ministries.

When Maulana Abul Kalam went to Lucknow from Wardha he saw Khaliq who told him that he was practically prepared to give him a blank cheque provided two of their members were included in the ministries—himself and Nawab Ismail Khan, the president of the U.P. Board. Maulana looked at all this with some suspicion but he felt attracted by the possibility of the whole Muslim League ceasing to exist as a separate group and being practically absorbed by the Congress.

He and Pant came to Allahabad and we discussed the matter at great length. I disliked (we all did) this bargaining for seats in the ministry. We disliked taking in

two persons who, from the Congress point of view, were weak. We feared reaction among the Congressmen in general, and Muslim Congressmen in particular, who would have been irritated at their being excluded in preference for those who had been fighting the Congress. What of those who had severed their connection with the League and joined us? What of those Muslims of ours who had stood by the Congress during all these years? What of the Jamiat which was supporting us and opposing the League? You must remember that we have always had a strong and staunch group of Muslims with us in U.P. They have not been many but they are growing in influence and younger Muslims are now strongly attached to us. Were we going to ignore those who were with us and favour our opponents who joined us just to get the spoils of office? And then, there was the risk of conflict arising within the ministry or the party—conflict of a communal or political nature—resulting in resignations and the creation of an awkward situation.

All this and more we considered and we hesitated. And yet the alternative was worth having if it could be secured. This was the winding up of the Muslim League group in U.P. and its absorption in the Congress. This would have a great effect not only in U.P. but all over India and even outside. This would mean a free field for our work without communal troubles. This would knock over the British Government which relied so much on these troubles.

After much discussion in which two other members of U.P. (Kripalani and Narendra Dev) joined, we came to the conclusion that we should offer stringent conditions to the U.P. Muslim League group and if they accepted them in toto then we would agree to two ministers from their group. Besides them one minister would be Rafi Ahmad.

We drew up these conditions. The March resolution of the Working Committee on Congress policy in the legislature was to be accepted from A to Z after full consideration, so that there might be no misapprehension. The Muslim League group will be wound up, including the U.P. Parliamentary Board; all the Muslim League M.L.A.s to become full members of the Congress party (but there was this that they were not specially asked to take the Congress pledge); all of them to abide by the discipline of the party; in by-elections no separate candidates; all to support the Congress candidates, and generally to endeavour to increase the prestige of the Congress. If the Congress decided on resignation from the ministry or from the legislature, they would follow suit. And some others. You will agree that these were pretty stringent conditions and in effect amounted to something more than the Congress pledge. But we did not ask them to sever all connections with the parent Muslim League. The position would have been a peculiar one involving a dual loyalty to some extent. It could not last and we expected the U.P. Leaguers to break away from the parent League.

We decided to offer these conditions and also that if any condition was not agreed to, then not to come to terms with them.

Maulana and Pant went to Lucknow. They sent for Nawab Ismail Khan but he was ill in Meerut and could not come. There were talks with Khalil who agreed

74. *From M.V. Rama Rao*

GANJAM ANDHRA MANDALI

Berhampur
 (Ganjam Dt.)
 22nd July 1937

Sir,

The following is a confirmation copy of the telegram which was sent this morning for your kind consideration.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
 M.V. Rama Rao
 Secretary

(Copy of Telegram)

GANJAM ANDHRA MANDALI CLAIMS REPRESENTATION ORISSA CABINET
 ANDHRAS FORM BIGGEST MOST INFLUENTIAL MINORITY COMMUNITY IN ORISSA
 PRAY WIRE RECOMMENDING ORISSA PREMIER INCLUSION LAKSHMIBAI ONLY
 ANDHRA CONGRESS MEMBER ASSEMBLY AT LEAST AMONG PARLIAMENTARY
 SECRETARIES

SECRETARY MANDALI

75. *From Mahadev Desai*

Wardha
 23-7-37

Dear Rajen Babu,

The article has been cancelled. I knew all would find it a tough proposition, but let them know betimes how Bapu's mind is working! You will please follow *Harijan* carefully now-a-days, for Bapu has decided to work out his plan of work for the ministers in a series of articles. But he is feeling the strain of work. The W.C. left him fagged out and though he has voluntarily taken rest, it might take long before he can get through his usual amount of work. He realised that he was burning the candle at both ends.

Yours,
 Mahadev

76. *From Pyarelal*

Segaon
Wardha
July 23, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am herewith returning to you the draft of the letter which you sent as amended by Bapu in one or two places. The amendments are of a minor character. You may send the letter as amended by Bapu if you approve of the amendments.

Bapu found that he had been driving himself too hard of late. He has, however, taken nature's warning to go slow and is trying to give himself as much rest as he can.

Yours sincerely,
Pyarelal

Enclosure not included.

77. *From A.V. Thakkar*

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Kingsway
Delhi, 26th July 1937

Re: *All Doms in Bihar, including Municipal sweepers, being treated as criminals under the Criminal Tribes Act.*

My dear Rajen Babu,

Mr. Indu Lal Yagnik of Bombay, my friend and a lover of the sweepers, was recently at Gaya. On his return to Bombay he sends me a letter dated the 22nd instant regarding hardship caused by the attendance at police station of sweeper Doms of Gaya, from which I extract below:

"Would you be astonished to know that, according to the information given by this old woman, all the male adult sweepers of Gaya city were compelled to mark their presence at the police station *nearby 4 times in the night—10 and 12 p.m. and 2 and 4 a.m.*—as they were suspected of thieving and pilfering. And I was further told that these men were brutally beaten time and again when they failed to present themselves punctually at the police station at all these odd hours of the night.

"I leave it to you to consider how these men can do their work during the day if they have to wake up throughout the night in this manner.

"May I request you to institute prompt enquiries into the matter and get these police orders rescinded at once through the Congress ministers and I have no doubt that this police zoolum is really responsible for the prevalence of drink in this community."

I too have observed this for 3 or 4 years past that even Dom sweepers of a large city like Patna are subjected to the same harsh treatment, and that they are quartered in a prison-like habitation and locked in at night. Why should all Doms, irrespective of their past records, be treated as criminals? Moreover, being compelled to go to a police station four times, night after night, is a horrible punishment. If the policeman goes to sweepers' quarters during the night, and marks the roll call of the men there, that would be a much lesser cruelty, if cruelty must be enforced.

Now in the days of the Congress ministries, we can expect some relaxation even in the rules of the C.T. Act. And who else can move into the matter more effectively than your goodself? I need not enumerate all the hardships to which the poor people are subjected from day to day at the hands of the police, as you are sure to know them well.

Kindly drop me a line to say what you propose to do in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar
General Secretary

Copies to:

1. Sjt. Vindhya Babu, Muzaffarpur.
2. Sjt. Indu Lal Yagnik, 21, Dalal Street, Bombay.

78. From Syed Mobarak Ali

Ali Manzil
P.O. Gulzarbagh
Patna
July 27th, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

[Apropos of] our talk of the 23rd current may I remind you to very kindly get me a copy of your and Mr. Jinnah's unity plan which unfortunately did not materialise. Your offer to Mr. Jinnah as published in *The Statesman* of the 23rd is very generous indeed and after I am in possession of these terms of which I have very faint recollection at the moment I propose to move in the matter and shall do my best to bring about the so needed communal harmony. Might I know, in case

the rank communalists of other Provinces stand in our way, is it possible for our Province to give a lead in the matter? We have fortunately in our midst the personality of your goodself and it is no secret that you enjoy equal confidence of all the communities alike and, therefore, it is all the more easy for us to give a lead to other Provinces and I have not the slightest doubt in my mind that others will follow suit sooner than later.

With compliments and apology for the trouble, I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Syed Mobarak Ali

79. To A.V. Thakkar

Sadaquat Ashram (Patna)
28/7/37

My dear Thakkar Bappa,

I have received your letter dated 26th July. The position with regard to Doms is this. There are two classes of Doms, both of them belong to the lowest strata of the society and both of them belong to one caste which is thoroughly untouchable in these parts. One of them belongs to Criminal Tribes and has been living on theft, robbery and the like. The other is not a Criminal Tribe at all. Those that are of the former class are many of them dealt with under the Criminal Tribes Act. In the municipalities Doms belonging to both the classes are employed and those that happen to belong to a Criminal Tribe have to undergo the restraints mentioned in your letter. It is not as if they are in the municipal service. In fact the municipalities get them into their service from some settlement or other which is run by the Salvation Army or through the police. Those restraints are not relaxed until the police find them free from vices for which these restrictions are imposed. The question, therefore, is not the treatment of the Depressed Classes but of dealing with Criminal Tribes. In this there may be, and probably there is, much room for improvement and the whole system dealing with criminals needs to be overhauled. I dare say Congress ministers have in mind the question of prison reform and similar other subjects and this may be taken up along with those questions. But the question of these *Maghahia Doms*, as these people are called, should not be confused with the question of Harijan uplift. I am, however, forwarding your letter to the Premier with a request that he may look into the matter and do whatever is possible in the circumstances. What I have said above is based upon my experience in Patna municipality and it may be that the position of the other municipalities is different. He will be able to get the exact information with regard to the other municipalities also.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

80. To Sri Krishna Sinha, Premier, Bihar Government

Sadaquat Ashram (Patna)
28th July 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

I am herewith forwarding to you a copy of a letter which I have received from Sjt. A.V. Thakkar, General Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh. It raises the question of treatment of Doms who are in the employ of municipalities and against whom the Criminal Tribes Act is applied. The question may be approached from two points of view—one is point of view of Harijan uplift and relate "not only to the Doms but to all other persons who are employed in the municipalities as sweepers such as Bhangis, Mehtars, etc. The other is the application and the administration of the Criminal Tribes Act. I dare say there is considerable room for improvement in both. I have no doubt that the question of treatment of criminal tribes and of criminals generally in prison will engage your attention and the case of these unfortunate Doms will be considered.

The question of general uplift of the Harijans also needs the attention of the Government and we shall be hoping that it will be taken up in a comprehensive way.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

81. From Pyarelal

Segaon
Wardha
July 28, 1937

Dear Rajendra Babu,

Dr. Choithram has written to Bapu to inquire whether Khan Sahib cannot be sent to Sindh for some time. Bapu has written to him in reply that he should ask Khan Sahib directly about it. On hearing from Khan Sahib, he would write to him himself if necessary.

Dr. Choithram has also strongly protested to Bapu about the scandal of paying legislators regular salaries apart from the unconscionable allowances etc. that the Congress legislators have proposed to themselves. But independently of Dr. Choithram the whole thing has shaken Bapu as nothing else since the constitutional issue presented itself. He feels that a basic principle has been sacrificed. It is not the amounts in themselves that matter so much as the outlook behind the whole deal. It is impossible to conceive of legislators and ministers drawing all these unconscionable salaries and allowances "combating" the Act.

The two are incompatible. I entirely agree with him that if we tolerate this thing the ministers would come to an inglorious end inside of six months — at least they will have deserved it — unless it is to cling to a still more inglorious existence. I wonder if Mahadev Bhai has written to you about it, but I felt and could not, in passing, help referring to it in the course of this letter.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Pyarelal

82. To M.V. Rama Rao, Secretary, Ganjam Andhra Mandali, Berhampur

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
29/7/37

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your telegram as well as your letter dated 22nd confirming it. In this matter I do not think it is right for me to interfere. You have to approach the Premier of the Province. I do not think that the minorities contemplated in the Constitution are minorities of the kind mentioned by you, they are religious and communal minorities. But when you yourself say that there is only one Andhra member of the Assembly I do not know how I shall press the Premier to take that one single member amongst the Secretaries.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

83. From Jawaharlal Nehru

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
July 30, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Maulana Azad asked me, in Lucknow, to have a meeting of the Working Committee fairly soon, that is, about the 3rd week of August. He felt that we should review the whole situation and consider what the Congress ministries have done and should do. There is also the question of salaries and allowances. I think that a meeting in August is desirable. I am going to Calcutta on the 7th August with Indu' for her tonsil's operation. I may have to remain there for

about ten days. If it suits you, we could have the Working Committee meeting about the 20th August or thereabouts. As for the place I suppose Wardha is again indicated as we must have Bapu present. If Bapu could go elsewhere only then could we have the meeting in another place.

At this meeting I suppose it would be desirable to invite the leaders of Congress parties, specially where the Congress ministries have been formed. Should we also invite the leaders from the minority provinces?

A vacancy is going to be created in the Working Committee when Govind Ballabh Pant resigns. We have to consider how to fill this.

Could you please let me have an early reply.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Your reply to Jinnah is splendid.

¹ Indira.

84. To Sri Krishna Sinha, Premier, Bihar Government

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
31/7/37

My dear Sri Babu,

I am herewith forwarding to you a letter and enclosures which I have received from Shri A.V. Thakkar dealing with the question of the Harijan uplift. It will appear that the work has been taken up in right earnest in the Madras Presidency and I think your Cabinet may usefully take up the work. I shall be obliged if you let me know what is proposed to be done in this connection. Shri Thakkar will always be ready, as also the Bihar Provincial Harijan Sevak Sangh and myself, to give such assistance as you may require in evolving a scheme or framing any other proposal.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

85. From A.V. Thakkar

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Kingsway
Delhi, 2nd August 1937

Re: *Criminal Tribes Act.*

My dear Rajen Babu,

I send you the attached cutting. I presume there is full truth in the "reliable understanding" of the United Press.

Correspondence and Select Documents

When the C.T. Act was applied, of course unjustifiably, to these young political workers, we can see the horridness of the same. The same Act, applied to Maghahiya Doms, working of course in a much lower status of life, is equally horrid to them, with the difference that they have not the equally long tongue, nor equally loud voice as Jogendra Shukul's gang. But please note that I do plead only for innocent men and not for habitual thieves.

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar
General Secretary

Enclosure not included.

86. *From Mahadev Desai*

Viceroy's House
Delhi
4.8.1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

A strange place to write one's letters from, isn't it? But whilst Bapu is busy with the Viceroy, having been invited by him to see him, I am making myself useful in one of the numerous rooms in this big house.

I do hope you are reading Bapu's articles in the *Harijan* carefully. He especially wants your views on his seemingly revolutionary proposals about education. Do you think they are educationally sound? You may have discussions with educationists you know and invite their views also and let Bapu have your considered reply.

I hope you are well. We leave here this evening, or tomorrow at the latest.

Yours,
Mahadev

87. *From M. Yunuo, Secretary to the Governor, Bihar*

Governor's Camp
Bihar
5th August 1937

Dear Babu Rajendra Prasad,

His Excellency desires me to say that he will be very glad to meet you, if you would care to come and see him tomorrow (Friday) afternoon, at 3.15 p.m.

Yours sincerely,
M. Yunuo
Secy. to Governor, Bihar

88. To M. Yunuo, Secretary to the Governor, Bihar

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
5.8.37

My dear Mr. Yunuo,

In continuation of my letter which I wrote to you in reply to yours just a short while ago, I may inform you that I have had telephonic communication with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. He has no objection to my seeing His Excellency the Governor, if the latter desires it, and writes to me formally to do so. I shall have much pleasure in seeing him if I receive a formal letter.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

89. From M. Yunuo, Secretary to the Governor, Bihar

Dar-ul-Malik
Fraser Road
Patna
5-8-37

My dear Babu Rajendra Prasad,

Regarding our conversation this morning about His Excellency's desire to see you and your very kind reply that you would see him subject to the permission being given by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru I have to inform you that His Excellency will be very glad to see you tomorrow the 6th inst. at 3.15 p.m. I shall be obliged if you will kindly send a reply per bearer to enable me to communicate to His Excellency that this time will suit you. I hope your and my anticipation that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will have no objection has come out and he has already given you the permission.

With best wishes and regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. Yunuo

90. To Rai Bahadur Sri Narayan Mahtha¹

BIHAR CENTRAL RELIEF COMMITTEE

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghhat, Patna
5th Aug. 1937

My dear Rai Bahadur Sri Narayan Mahtha,

I have seen your note in the papers and am glad to learn that the District Board

will be prepared to take necessary steps for the relief of sufferers in the Manusmara area. I have discussed the situation with Dr. Rajeshwar Prasad and he thinks that relief can be organised without any very heavy expenditure. He suggests that to the Majorganj Dispensary there should be added a temporary Indoor Department with about 20 beds. The staff there should be reinforced by two additional doctors and the necessary number of compounders, coolies, etc. for a period of, say, 3 to 6 months to cope with this additional indoor work. The equipment of the hospital should be improved and arrangements for microscopic work made. A sufficient stock of medicine should be provided. The samples of blood which were brought by him and which were examined have shown large percentage of cases of kala-azar, about 50 per cent, the remaining being cases of malaria. These yield to treatment and can be successfully tackled if a sufficient stock of medicines for injections is supplied. Even in cases of malaria simple quinine mixture is not likely to be quite effective in many cases and there should be provisions of other medicines of the modern sort also. Amongst the doctors to be employed, one should be particularly competent in laboratory work for the examination of blood etc. I would request you to take up this work earnestly without delay and I have no doubt you will have earned the merit of saving many lives. If the District Board is not able to meet the entire costs I would suggest that it may approach the Local Govt. for help. So much for immediate relief.

The work of permanent relief is even more important. I understand that the Government has been in correspondence with Nepal for opening up the channel of the Manusmara but its efforts have so far borne no fruit. There are other alternative schemes also. It is for you all to create public opinion and urge the Government to press its political agent for a settlement of this question and to take such steps in British territory as may be considered feasible. I feel certain that with unanimous public opinion behind it, the Government will be able to achieve what it has so far failed to get.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

¹ A prominent zamindar of Muzaffarpur in Bihar and later a member of the Central Legislature.

91. From B. Shiva Rao

6th Aug. 37

RAJENDRA PRASAD

CARE CONGRESS COMMITTEE PATNA

KINDLY RECONSIDER DECISION REGARDING APPOINTMENT ADVOCATE
GENERAL ESPECIALLY FROM STANDPOINT COMMUNAL REACTIONS STOP
WRITING

SHIVARAO

92. To Sri Krishna Sinha, Premier, Bihar Government

6th August '37

My dear Sri Babu,

In continuation of my letter dated 31st of July 1937, I am forwarding herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from Shri Thakkar, the General Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh re: Maghahia Doms.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure:

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Kingsway
Delhi, 31st July 1937

Re: *Maghahia Dom Sweepers.*

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am thankful to you for your letter dated 28-7-37. The law stands as you have explained it, and though I believe it can be enforced less cruelly than now, the police department are sometimes helpless. My complaint is about the fundamental principle of the Criminal Tribes Act, and about its rigid enforcement, without any human consideration.

In the first place, why should all the 100% of Doms (or Maghahia Doms) be considered criminal? If there are a number of previous convictions against each and every one of them, I have nothing to say. But a man should not be considered criminal merely because he is born of Maghahia parents. The caste system is here enforced with a vengeance. But when such people are in the regular service of the municipality and living in municipal quarters (locked up at night as in the case of Patna), why should they be branded as criminals? The very fact of their being regular workers under a public body should entitle them to be considered as honourable men. When these Doms become Christians and take the shelter of missionaries, they are exempted from the roll-call and thus a regular encouragement is given, though indirectly, to their conversion to Christianity or Islam.

I am taking interest in them as almost all criminal tribesmen are Harijans and very few men, if at all any, of higher castes are branded as criminal. In case some Brahmin or Kshatriya sub-caste had been considered criminal, a great hue and cry would have been raised long ago, but we do not come to know the oppression that these poor men are subjected to in the name of the C.T. Act, or in the name of prevention of crime. The Act which requires that a man should be considered

criminal, *before* he actually commits a crime, is a bad law and should go out of the Statute Book. It is a remnant of Thugee and Pindhari days of the early part of the 19th century, and should no longer continue to be the law of the land in the middle of the 20th century. We may have colonies or settlements to reform them, and to provide them with regular work, but to take roll-call of persons who have worked hard during the day time, four times every night in a police station, seems to be very inhuman.

I hope you understand my point of view, and you will be kind enough to forward this letter also to the Premier with your remarks and recommendation.

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar
General Secretary

93. *From B. Shiva Rao*

"Hyde Vale Cottage"
Simla S.W.
7th August 1937

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter I have addressed to Mr. Sri Krishna Sinha. The letter explains itself.

I hope your health is better now.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Shiva Rao

Enclosure:

"Hyde Vale Cottage"
Simla S.W.
7th August 1937

Dear Mr. Sri Krishna Sinha,

I took the liberty of sending you a telegram yesterday about the appointment of the Advocate-General in Bihar. For personal as well as public reasons it seems to me undesirable, if I may say so, to insist upon Sir Sultan Ahmed making room for another. I have been in the closest touch with him during the last three months. He has throughout taken a consistently helpful and strong line in advocating a conciliatory attitude towards the Congress. He, far more than anyone else in the Government of India, is entitled to credit for appreciating the point of view of the Congress in the matter of assurances.

In regard to other matters too, such as the Indo-British Trade Agreement or the Wedgwood Committee's Report or the appointment of Indians to places of responsibility, his policy has been that of a staunch nationalist. I know it from Indian officials in more than one Department that since his coming here he has been successful in getting Sir Jagdish Prasad and Sir N.N. Sircar to act with him so that the three Indian members of the Executive Council now pursue a common line of action. The result is that there is a new feeling in the Government of India.

Apart from these personal grounds, I am afraid that the refusal on the part of the Bihar Government to recognise a non-Congress Advocate-General may be misunderstood as being based on communal considerations, especially as both Madras and the U.P. have appointed Hindu non-Congress Advocates-General. I hope you will not mind my writing to you on this subject.

There is another matter to which I want to draw your attention. As Premier I suppose you will go down to Wardha for the Working Committee meeting. I have been in touch with Mahatmaji on a subject which, I think, is of great importance. On 18th March this year the Commander-in-Chief, in reply to a debate initiated by Pandit Kunzru for the replacement of British by Indian troops in this country, declared that he could not withdraw British troops maintained for internal security purposes on the eve of Provincial Autonomy. In the past, he said, whenever such a proposal was made the Local Government concerned lodged a vigorous protest. If, however, he continued, the autonomous Provinces declared that they would not need the British troops for the maintenance of law and order, a new situation would arise which would have to be considered by the Government of India. I believe Mr. Asaf Ali is sending a circular round to the Premiers of all the eleven Provinces on this subject. I think it would be most helpful if the six Premiers who will be at Wardha could give a lead in the matter.

With kind regards,

Yours, sincerely,
Shiva Rao

94. From Rai Bahadur Sri Narayan Mahtha

Muzaffarpur
B. & N.W. Rly.
The 8th August 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu.

I am thankful to you for your D.O. letter No. 4759 dated 5th August 1937 re. anti-malarial measures in Majorganj thana. I am enclosing a leaflet which will show the number of medical men deputed by the Board to work there. A

microscope has also been sent to Majorganj hospital. Ten tubewells are also being put in for healthy water supply. The Health Officer of the Board, who is a government servant and is on urgent orders of transfer, is also working in Majorganj in addition to the staff mentioned in the leaflet. But he will have in a few days to report himself to the Director of Public Health, Patna, for duty. This is likely to dislocate work and may result in disorganisation. If you could persuade the ministry to stay the transfer order for a couple of months, it should be helpful.

The Collector and Civil Surgeon, Muzaffarpur, will be in Majorganj tomorrow and the day after and, I understand, personally negotiate regarding the diversion of the Manusmara, with the Hakim of Nepal Government stationed at the border.

The District Board staff and the Thana officer there have already collected necessary statistics for us to go upon. We hope to adequately intensify medical relief measures immediately on the return of the Collector and Civil Surgeon to headquarters. You have very correctly anticipated the financial inability of the District Board to deal with this vast problem without government assistance. In the sanguine hope, however, that the present government will not grudge or refuse the help that is needed I am going ahead. I shall be happy indeed if you would use your persuasion, if necessary, with the government to sanction or assure us adequate funds.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sri Narayan Mahtha

Enclosure not included.

95. From Rai Bahadur Sri Narayan Mahtha

Muzaffarpur
B. & N.W. Rly.
August 9, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

As the public is naturally feeling very deeply concerned over the situation in Majorganj thana, it will lessen anxiety if you would have your letter No. 4759 dated 5th August and my reply thereto sent to the Patna papers for publication. As I could not do so without your permission I have taken the liberty of writing to you this letter. It will save time if you have the two letters sent to Press instead of asking me to do so. Apologise for the trouble.

With profoundest regards, I remain,

Yours respectfully,
Sri Narayan Mahtha

96. From A.V. Thakkar

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Patna

10th August 1937

My dear Rajen Babu,

In consultation with Vindhya Babu and Jagjivan Ram I have prepared the attached estimate and note for the increased facilities for Harijans and non-Christian aborigines in Bihar.

I have given three copies to Dr. Syed Mahmud for himself and Anugrah Babu, and have also spoken to Anugrah Babu about this matter.

Kindly see that this is given effect to. If it be not attended to now, it can never be. And I see that very little is done in the past for our very large masses of Harijans and aborigines of Bihar.

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar

Enclosure:

Additional concessions etc. for Harijan and Hindu (or non-Christian) aboriginal students

| Scholarships (1) | Number (2) | Amount per month (3) | Total for six months (4) |
|---|---------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Senior (College) @ Rs.20 per month | 3 | 60-0-0 | 360-0-0 |
| 2. Junior (College) @ Rs.15 per month | 10 | 150-0-0 | 900-0-0 |
| 3. For H.E. Schools including vocational @ Rs.6 per month | 134 | 804-0-0 | 4,824-0-0 |
| 4. For books to College students | | Lump | 500-0-0 |
| 5. For books to H.E. and vocational students | | Lump | 1,000-0-0 |
| 6. For aid to private free hostels @ Rs.6 per month per inmate | 170 | 1,020-0-0 | 6,120-0-0 |
| 7. Special scholarships for M.E. School students @ Rs.4 per month | 188 | 752-0-0 | 4,512-0-0 |

(Contd.)

| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) |
|---|-----|----------|------------|
| 8. Special scholarships to Primary school students who study away from their houses @ Rs.2 & Rs.4 per month—16 districts X 20 | 320 | 960-0-0 | 5,760-0-0 |
| | | | 23,976-0-0 |
| | | Say, Rs. | 24,000-0-0 |

All scholarships and grants to private hostels to be given by the department after consultation with the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

All proposals for sinking wells to be decided after consultation with the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

Books and clothes to M.E. and primary students to be supplied by local bodies.

Directions should be given to Cooperative Department and local bodies for organising cooperative societies for the benefit of Depressed Class employees of the local bodies and of other Harijans and aborigines.

Remissions of fees in colleges, H.E., M.E., and all other schools to be strictly enforced.

NOTE ON THE EDUCATION OF HARIJANS AND NON-CHRISTIAN ABORIGINALS IN BIHAR

Harijan Hindus are clearly demarcated and defined. Though the names of Harijan castes are not given in the Director of Public Instruction's report anywhere, the numbers of the castes are given on page 31 and their names on page 283 of the Bihar Census Report of 1931. Their total population is given as 65,10,000.

Aborigines are divided into Christians and non-Christians in the Director of Public Instruction's report. And very rightly they should be separated, as one has no connection with the other. Moreover, they belong to different societies and their educational equipments differ considerably. There is a great difference in their numbers too. While the Christian aborigines are only 3,59,000, the non-Christians are as many as 52,84,644, or the non-Christian aborigines are as many as 14.7 times the Christians. Moreover the Christians are 11 times more advanced in education as a whole than the non-Christians, and 76 times more advanced in the matter of high school and college education than the non-Christian aborigines. Thus the interests of the two are quite different and the treatment and the special facilities should be intended only for the little educated or non-Christians only.

All the above figures are for the Province of Bihar and Orissa before separation. They will have to be corrected for Bihar taken alone. But the main conclusions will not differ to any appreciable extent.

Freeship

Fees are not levied in primary schools, reduced rates are charged in middle and high schools and in colleges fees are not charged "if they are not receiving other scholarships from public funds". This is for Harijans. Probably it is the same for aborigines, though nothing is definitely mentioned for them in the report.

As both these classes, Harijans (or Scheduled Castes) and non-Christian aborigines, are extremely backward and very poverty-stricken too, they should be completely exempted from the payment of fees in primary, middle, high and technical schools in all Government-aided and local bodies' schools. This is the case in the Central Provinces, and to a great extent in Bombay and Madras. This concession, if given, must be made known extensively to all the schools, specially primary and middle schools, as well as to the Harijan and aboriginal populations, by all possible means. If District Boards will suffer any loss of income thereby, compensation may, if necessary, be given by the Government. But most probably such compensation will not be needed. Aided middle and high schools and colleges may require, but very little, compensation.

Free Books and other Materials and Capitation Grants to Primary Teachers

It is very necessary, if the education of these two classes—Harijans and non-Christian aborigines—is to be advanced, that certain sums of money should be placed at the disposal of District Boards for a free supply of slates, books and other materials to students of these classes. Also the system of capitation grants to teachers of primary schools for drawing pupils from these classes, already introduced, should be freely extended and if possible universalised. District Boards of Patna and Gaya gave these capitation grants in 1935-36 but, I am told, they have given it up as they could not afford the money. The Government should give the Boards the cost of books and also the capitation grants to the District and Municipal Boards. That is a very cheap and practicable means of drawing large number of pupils from these classes to ordinary schools, not to speak of starting special schools. Even the Director of Public Instruction remarks in clause 174 that "more money might be usefully spent in this way".

How much money can be set apart for these two items of expenditure depends upon the amount of money that can be spared. But the principle may be established by at present providing a small amount for utilising it in forward districts.

Special Scholarships

A large number of special scholarships for both these classes of pupils in middle and high schools and technical schools and colleges should be provided for encouraging their education. Bombay, including Sind, which has less than one-third of such population, provided as many as 609 scholarships, of the value

of Rs.4 to Rs.8 per month, in the year 1935-36, while only 8 such stipends of Rs.3 to Rs.6 were provided in the same year for Bihar and Orissa (vide the note of the Director of Public Instruction to the Secretary of the Bihar D.C. League, dated the 18th May 1936).

For colleges, arts and professional, also a good number of scholarships may be provided. The two scholarships of Rs.10 and Rs.15 provided at present do not meet the situation. I have, therefore, for the present suggested 13 such scholarships.

Hostel Grants

For the encouragement of higher education, i.e. in high schools, technical schools and colleges, it is necessary that boys be given free boarding and lodging. I have seen two such hostels for aborigines, one in Naya Dumka in Santal Parganas and the other in Ranchi, the former under Government management and the latter under private management of Birla family. There are similar hostels for Harijans and aborigines being conducted at Monghyr, Muzaffarpur and Ranchi by the Harijan Sevak Sangh. There should be a greater number of such hostels for Harijans and aborigines and for Harijans all over the Province. In the absence of free Government hostels, private free and well-managed hostels should be aided and paid at the rate of so many rupees per month per boy and by introducing this system, new hostels will crop up in many more district towns where they are badly needed. Unless such free hostels are started, boys dare not leave their villages to go to study in high schools and colleges. Government hostels will be too expensive and, therefore, private and controlled free hostels should be encouraged by the Government by award of grants payable monthly.

Protector of Backward Classes

Bombay and Madras have special departments called the (1) Backward Class and (2) Labour and Rural Uplift Departments under special officers, whose main duty is to look after the various methods for the uplift of Harijans and aborigines. The annual reports of the Bombay Backward Classes Officer and the Commissioner for Labour and Rural Uplift may be perused to great advantage. Besides special educational facilities, these two classes of people have to be provided with house sites in villages. Their condition has also to be improved economically in various ways and the Kamia system of serfdom practised on Bhuiyas or Musahars, Chamars and Dusadhs has to be done away with. Constant supervision by a special officer and his department is needed for this very purpose. The number of these classes is very large—65 lakhs of Harijans, and 53 lakhs of aborigines, or a total of 118 lakhs, in the total population of 423 lakhs in Bihar and Orissa. In fact they form more than one-fourth of the total population and such a large mass cannot be allowed to continue to remain in their present degraded and wretched condition by the new Government.

97. To Rai Bahadur Sri Narayan Mahtha

11th August 1937

My dear Rai Bahadur Sri Narayan Mahtha,

I thank you for your letter dated 8th and 9th August 1937 which I received on my return to Patna yesterday. I am glad that steps are being taken to meet the situation in Majorgunj area. I do not think I should take any steps in my personal capacity as I am sure any representation by the District Board both as regards the particular officer whose services you require and any contribution towards the expenses which may be made by the District Board will receive due consideration at the hands of the Ministry.

As suggested by you I am sending the correspondence to the Press.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

98. From Bishnuram Medhi

ASSAM PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Gauhati
11th August 1937

My dear Sri Rajendra Prasadj,

In the midst of your busy programme I venture to interrupt you just on the eve of the Working Committee meeting to ascertain your views regarding coalition of Congress party in the assembly with other groups and individual members for the purpose of throwing out the present ministry and formation of a coalition ministry under strict Congress discipline. If you think necessary you may place the matter before the Working Committee and let us know the considered views of yourself and that of the committee. I have been asked by the leader of the Congress Assembly party to write to you.

You may be aware that although Assam Congress party in the Assembly forms a large group, yet at present the party position is such that the opposition, however vehement, is not effective.

The Press message of Mahatmaji giving his approval to the idea of forming a coalition ministry in the N.W. Frontier Province has created a stir in various non-ministerial groups and individuals in Assam Assembly now in session.

Your presence at Shillong just after the Working Committee is likely to create a favourable atmosphere for the overthrow of the present ministry. Your advice will be valuable to the party regarding the desirability of forming a coalition with

groups or individuals undertaking to give full support to the Congress parliamentary programme and agreeing to place themselves under the Congress discipline in the matter. Your personal presence and guidance in the light of the circumstances prevailing from day to day will be of great help to the party.

I, therefore, request you to come to Shillong soon after the meeting of the Working Committee. I have also written to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at the suggestion of party leader Syt. Gopinath Bardoloi to come to Shillong to induce some of the Muslim members to join the Congress.

It will be better if you kindly induce him also to accompany you to Shillong after the Working Committee.

It is the desire of the Assam Congress Assembly party that you both should once come to Shillong during the Assembly and Council sessions.

Please wire when we can expect you.

Yours sincerely,
Bishnuram Medhi

99. From Parmeshwara Dayal (Advocate, Gaya) and others

Gaya, the 13th August 1937

Sir,

We, the undersigned citizens of Gaya, beg to draw your attention to a matter which is worthy of your consideration and we trust that our request will commend itself to you and will meet with your approval. Our townsman, Mr. S.K.P. Sinha, is well-known to you. In our opinion he possesses capabilities of a high order and he gave ample proof of it when as a member of the last Legislative Council he made himself the chief champion of popular causes. We should not conceal from you the fact that it is a matter of regret to us that his services have not been secured for public use in the present legislature. He is a Congressman and even on the score of party grounds there can be no objection to his being made a member of either House of the legislature. The appointment of Babu Baldev Sahay as Advocate General will enable him to speak in the Council and Assembly both without being a member and therefore his seat in the Upper House becomes available for another man. We request that that seat be offered to Mr. S.K.P. Sinha. We feel that this will be a step in the right direction calculated to serve public interest and this is our sole justification for trespassing upon your attention. At the time of the general election when he was not selected for the Assembly we were under the impression that he would be sent to the Indian Legislative Assembly. But that seat has also been filled up, and we feel that the omission has become glaring and needs to be corrected.

Yours respectfully,
Parmeshwara Dayal

100. To Gopinath Bardoloi, Leader, Congress Party, Shillong

Sadaquat Ashram.
Patna
22nd August 1937

My dear Mr. Bardoloi,

At Wardha I received a communication from Shri Bishnuram Medhi asking for suggestion about the desirability of a combination between Congress and non-Congress members of the Assam Legislature. There was a reference from Bengal on a similar question. In reply I wrote to Shri Medhi and also sent him a copy of the Resolution of the Working Committee on the subject. You might be aware that the Working Committee is not prepared to sanction formation of alliance for purpose of forming ministries in Provinces where the Congress is in minority and while permitting alliances for opposition laid down that there should be no alliance for Ministry without the previous sanction of the Working Committee. I am, therefore, surprised to read the accompanying note in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. I shall be obliged if you let me know the situation there. You will agree that even if a stage is reached when the Working Committee may be induced to permit alliance for forming ministries it is wholly undesirable and undignified to fix the personnel of the coalition ministry and to publish it in the Press, before the Working Committee not having even been asked to consider the question and sanction the coalition.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

101. From Gopinath Bardoloi

ASSAM CONGRESS PARTY

Shillong
August 25, 1937

My dear Sjt. Rajendra Prasad,

I am sorry to find that you are taking notice of a newspaper stunt. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* agent is a mischievous fellow and I am afraid he is responsible for all these nonsensical and foolish articles appearing from time to time. Last time, soon after your last W. Committee resolution was out, they said that 24 Mohomedans were signing the Congress creed. Now after they have found that you are talking of coalition, at least indirectly, they are coming out with this huge

joke. I also asked them to contradict a Press report appearing in the Patrika about Chaliha moving for a coalition. I believe his opinion is personal. Neither the Provincial Congress Committee nor the Congress have thought about the coalition, and in spite of hundreds of suggestions coming from different places, we have remained integrally firm and in case of the European group, have not even given our programme etc. for which they have asked. I think you will do well to send a warning to the A.P. against publishing such mischievous news. You might well see that I would write, as I am doing now, over any matter that I consider important.

While, however, we are a single party, we have worked out your directions in the spirit of your last Wardha Resolutions. We have managed to defeat the Govt. in 7 cut motions, the details of which are given below. In all these we have been helped mainly by these non-Congress groups: (1) the Surma Valley Hindus—5; (2) The Muslim League, varying from 5 to 9 members; (3) a floating and unstable body of Muslims from Surma Valley known as the United Muslim Party. Occasionally we are also getting a few stray votes from the Scheduled Caste members from both valleys and a tribal or two also.

Analysing our achievements you will well see that we are not doing worse than even Congress Ministries. With the exception of Excise where we failed and in construction departments, where we may not be much inclined to throw off the provisions of the Budget grants, I think we have done very well. You might have seen the *Advance* and *The Statesman* (Dak Edition) of Sunday, 22nd August. They are suggesting resignation of the present ministry, and I have not the least doubt that did the Governor know that we are out for coalition he would have sent for us. The situation over the cut of the Commissioners has raised a grave issue and the Govt. are trying to evade the consequences by raising a technical point, viz., that under rule 79(2) of the Govt. of India Act, there can be no cut on an item of a grant. Sir Sa'dulla tried to distinguish the two, viz., 72(D) (3) of the old Act wherein, he says, that power has been given and which, he says, has been now withdrawn in the present section 79(2). The position, according to him, is that we can cut a main grant but not items. The Advocate General is addressing the House today evidently in support of the contention.

The stage has surely arisen now when another coalition Govt. may take the place of the present one. My attitude has all along been that I would not go out to seek the alliance of any party; but if any party or group would come to us and give terms, I shall forward them to you and the Working Committee through you for your consideration. Till then I remain where we were and we will never show the least anxiety for office, as we are really not. There are, however, people among our members and plenty outside, who are egging us on to this end. But I think I have remained quite firm till now. I, however, agree that some personal discussions with persons like you are absolutely necessary for a thorough understanding of the situation and that action should be taken over this. Could you come and, if so, when? Our Assembly session will be over on the 1st September.

You may be sure that the honour of the Congress will remain safe in our hands and nothing will be done to impair it in the least. I am sending a clipping of my speech (which did not appear in the Calcutta paper) for your perusal. Have I been right in putting the Congress viewpoint correctly? I shall feel encouraged by a reply from you.

Trust you are fit.

Yours very sincerely,
G.N. Bardoloi
Leader, Congress Party, Assam

Enclosure not included.

102. From Gopinath Bardoloi

ASSAM CONGRESS PARTY

Shillong/Gauhati
September 10, 1937

My dear Sree Rajendra Prasad,

I received your note in due time, but we had such strenuous times that we had hardly any time to write to you. In the meantime you must have been so busy over the N.W. Frontier affairs that I did not dare to disturb you.

Things very much changed after I wrote to you. The spirit of the Congress programmes pervading through some Muslim members was responsible for the many defeats the ministry was suffering at our hands. The papers must have told you about our performances. I don't know even if we were in power we could carry out all that we did in spite of a reactionary ministry. The censure motion on the Commissioners' staff for retrenchment of Commissioner and refusal of temporary C.I.D. grants are feats which Congress Ministry does not appear to have undertaken. We carried some other important motions relating practically to all the relief measures that Congress stood for, in spite of ministerial opposition. But, as I told you, all this was possible due to the Muslim League party of about 6-9, and 3 or 4 independent Muslims (actually belonging to a party known as United Muslim Party), and 9 Hindus including 4 scheduled caste members of the Surma Valley supporting us.

On the 27th August we had our Land Revenue Reduction (50%) Resolution. The spirit of cooperation with us was prevalent among those non-Congress members. In their speeches the Leader of the Muslim League, Maulavi A. Matin Choudhury, and one Maulavi A. Rahman from Surma Valley Muslims strongly supported it. The debate was carried beyond the conventional time (5 p.m.) by the kindness of the Speaker; then the ministerial party began their dilatory tactics till prayer time came. We moved for closure, but failed, the rule being that

2/3 of the members present must be in favour of the motion; and the debate adjourned till 30.8.37.

The whole atmosphere changed in the meanwhile. It was given out among the Muhammadans that the Muslim Raj was at stake. Telegram after telegram began to pour into the Muslim members that our resolution of 50% reduction meant a no-confidence motion and hence all Muslims should unite to defeat it and rally round the Muslim Ministry. On the 29th, one Mr. Ansari (said to be the nephew of late Dr. Ansari) addressed all the Muslim members of the House and insisted on a Muslim solidarity under the banner of the Muslim League. Except one, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, M.A. (Cantab), L.L.B., Bar-at-Law, the staunchest Muhammadan supporter of the Congress, who resisted this move, and refused to be a party to the League, the rest joined. I understand they agreed to tone down their attitude towards the Congress Land Revenue Resolution by consenting to support an amendment of 33 p.c. Then the same party agreed to withdraw their amendment of ministers' salary for Rs.1,500 and Rs.1,000, to the Govt. bill of Rs.2,800 and Rs. 1,800. They also secured the approval of the ministers to passing of the Members' Salary Bill for Rs.100 p.m. and Rs.5 daily allowance in place of the Government proposal of Rs.1,000 per year and Rs.3 per diem. On the 30th we lost our Land Revenue Resolution, which stood at the amendment above stated. On the 1st September we were defeated in every item, beginning from the Speaker's Salary Bill to the Members' Emoluments Bill—Congress fighting every inch of the ground with their 9 supporters from the Surma Valley Hindus and Scheduled Castes, Babu Kedarmal of the commerce constituency and of course the brave Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed.

The situation as left on the 1st September is that we are only 42 now—the Govt. side being composed of 33 Musalmans, 13 Europeans, and labourers and about 20 of Assam Valley United Peoples Party and Hill Tribes.

There are some who seem to think that if you and Maulana Azad had been here this communal combination would not have been possible and Congress would not have to face a communal bloc. The communal Hindus now fear that this is a prelude to a policy of populating the whole Assam Valley with Muhammadan immigrants and converting Assam into a Muhammadan Province.

The Congress, of course, is free from any of these misgivings but what we all feel is the want of proper guidance at the right moment from the Centre. The condition of Assam is so very peculiar and its problems so manifold that we feel the necessity for more consultation and better coordination with the central body. It appears, however, that you (I do not mean you individually) pay no importance to our manifold problems. The Province is tired of asking Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to visit the Province at least once. We feel you (I mean you and Maulana Saheb) should also visit the place locally to understand its peculiar problems. It is by such contact alone that you would encourage us and make the Congress stronger. Indeed there are so many things to consult you (for which you must of course know the local conditions) that we will treasure a tour by you two. Will you be available for a tour towards the end of November or beginning of

December? It will of course be cold here then, but surely not quite unbearable.
Hoping to hear from you,

Yours sincerely,
G.N. Bardoloi
Leader, Assam Congress Party

103. From Chandreshwar Pd. Narayan Sinha

Patna
15th Sept. 1937

My dear Sjt. Rajendra Babu,

I am sending you the original letter received from Rai Bahadur Badri Narayan Singh of Jaintpur. I was informed by one of your workers that Brajnandan Babu would be talking to me on this point. When he does so I shall try to find out what further can be done in the matter. At present, we are all busy with the session of the Assembly. When we return to Muzaffarpur I propose to look up this question again.

Trust you are keeping fit in spite of your incessant touring.

With pranams,

Yours sincerely,
Chandreshwar Pd. Narayan Sinha

104. From Raja Narendranath, M.L.A., Punjab

Strawberry Hill
Simla E.
16th September 1937

My dear Babu Rajendra Prasad,

I have just seen "Jinnah-Rajendra Prasad Agreement" about replacing separate electorates by joint electorates. I remember we met at Delhi some years ago. Pandit Nanakchand was with me. We agreed to have joint electorates without disturbing the seats assigned to each community by the Communal Award. So far as the Punjab is concerned the condition that we attached was that the Sikhs should also be reconciled to our view and that our assent was subject to their assent. I remember having asked you the number of seats assigned to the Federal Legislature for Provinces in which Hindus were in majority. I think that you said the number as far as you remembered was 40 and then about the Federal Legislature I also agreed to joint electorates on the basis of seats assigned by the

Communal Award to the various communities in the Central Legislature. There was no talk so far as I remember about differential franchise or about population being reflected in the voters' strength. Am I right? You obtained our signatures on some sort of paper; but there was no mention in it either about differential franchise or population being reflected in voters' register. My memory seldom fails me in important matters like these, I even remember the figures; but it is just possible that this particular case may be an exception and I might have forgotten the purport of what I signed. The formula as is now announced never came before us in its entirety. Do I remember aright?

So far as Punjab and Bengal are concerned this demand about differential franchise on the part of Muslims is absurd. The communal distribution of the population in east and west is such that no community benefits or loses by lowering of the franchise. An intelligent man like Jinnah should be able to see through it. The differential franchise detracts from the value of joint electorates.

What is meant by population being reflected in the voters' register? The expression is much too vague. If in the Punjab or Bengal the voting strength of Muslims is 51% can we not say the population is reflected on the voters' register? All that is needed is that a majority in the population should not be a minority in the voters' register.

I am a very careful reader of all that is going on in the country in the sphere of politics. I find from day to day that my anticipations with regard to the communal question cropping up when you sit down to frame a new constitution have been correct. The amendment which Mr. Jinnah thinks of proposing about the Constituent Assembly is significant. The Communal problem is a hard nut to crack and I fear it will break your teeth when you grapple with the control of the Military and the Foreign Policy.

You visit the Punjab but you move within a very narrow circle. The communal problem is most poignant in our Province. Every now and then there are murders and clashes about the route of procession and of music before mosque. On your next visit to Punjab, will you kindly include Panipat in your itinerary and take Desh Bandhu Gupta with you? There is trouble there with regard to the route of procession and music before mosques. The Hindus are most dissatisfied with the orders of the Deputy Commissioner who is an Indian (but a Muslim). In his letter received yesterday Mr. Desh Bandhu Gupta writes to me that "the Hindus are being made to feel that they are helpless and there is no justice for them left in the Punjab. This feeling should not be allowed to grow." The feeling has arisen over the question of route and music before mosques. Will you kindly explain both to the Hindus and Muslims at Panipat that these mutual squabbles about trivials delay the application of the Statute of West Minster to India!!! I hope your appeal to them will prove effective.

You cannot imagine to what extent I am worried by people who come to me to complain about local officers. Hindus only come to me and not Muslims. They are dissatisfied with the Hindu Deputy Commissioners because they are weak. They are dissatisfied with Muslim Deputy Commissioners because they are

bigotted. As to Europeans they can very well understand what their policy has been and will be in the future in the face of the pronouncement by the Viceroy that the Civil Service should follow loyally the policy of the Ministry under whom they serve. In the Punjab of course they suppose there is Muslim Raj in spite of Sir Sikandar's assurances to the contrary. When you come here, you have not only to secure mass contact with the Muslims but also to help in the solution of communal problems which the Congress Ministry of the future will have to tackle. Unless you solve those problems, you will not get Muslim support for the Congress. All that we urge is that you have not only to reconcile the Muhammadans but also to satisfy the Hindus. I am willing to help but Sir G.C. Narang and Bhai Parmanand should also be consulted.

Yours sincerely,
Narendranath

P.S.

If each community is to have separate single-member constituencies, joint electorates become valueless.

105. To Vallabhbhai Patel

Camp Lucknow
17th September 1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I owe you an apology for not writing to you so long. I have received your two letters dated 11th and 12th September. When Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and I reached the Frontier we found the position of the parties in the Legislature as follows:

| | |
|---|----|
| Congress party | 19 |
| Independents ready to support the Congress | 2 |
| Hindu and Sikh nationalists ready to support the Congress | 2 |
| Democrats ready to support the Congress | 4 |
| Sir A. Qaum's party | 16 |
| Hindu-Sikh nationalists supporting Sir Qaum | 6 |
| Speaker | 1 |

The eight members supporting the Congress and nineteen Congress members had already jointly given notice that they would move a vote of no-confidence against the Qaum Ministry in the Assembly. We arrived on the night of the 31st August and the Assembly was going to meet on the morning of the 1st. When the Assembly met this notice of no-confidence was formally given and the same 27 members who had formally signed the requisition stood in their seats in support

of it. The Speaker fixed the 3rd of September for the discussion of the motion of no-confidence. The Finance Minister introduced the budget but the 27 members walked out after Dr. Khan Saheb had made a short statement to the effect that in view of the no-confidence motion it was waste of time to listen to the budget speech of the outgoing Minister. On the 2nd the Assembly met again to transact other business but was adjourned. It was certain that no-confidence motion would be passed by 27 against 22 but the Ministry did not give up hope or effort to win over some of those outside the Congress who were in favour of the no-confidence motion and till the last moment temptations and threats continued to be made to them. We were on our side having consultation with those members as also with some others. The three Ministers also saw us. Sir A. Qaum was also paying a formal visit but Mr. Mehrchand Khanna had a long conversation giving his own views about the situation. The point with which we were most concerned was whether Congress would take the responsibility of forming the Ministry as it did not have absolute majority and whether eight outsiders who were with the Congress in the no-confidence resolution could be persuaded to join the party. It became clear at an early stage that the Province as a whole wanted a change in the Ministry and were anxious that the Congress should take it up. The above-mentioned eight members were insistent and even some others who were supporting the Qaum Ministry on account of previous pledges and promises pressed that the Congress should take office after the no-confidence motion. Some of them offered to support the Congress when they took office. The general situation in the Province demanded that the Congress should take responsibility and not allow things to drift. One of the things which influenced all those who wanted a Congress Ministry was that there was no alternative to the Qaum Ministry if Congress did not take office and even those who felt bound to vote against the no-confidence motion on account of previous promises were keen that there should be a change in the Ministry. We, therefore, put it to the eight members to formally sign the Congress pledge and thus enable it to take office. They said that so far as the programme and policy was concerned there was no difference between them and the Congress although they would like to lay more emphasis on the constructive side of the Congress than on the wrecking part of it. But they were reluctant to sign the Congress pledge as many of them had fought Congress candidates at the election and defeated them at the polls and had naturally talked against them and the Congress programme and policy during their election campaign. They felt it would be awkward for them to sign the pledge of the Congress so soon after they had denounced it. They also felt that the opponents would make capital out of it and go to their constituencies and carry on propaganda against them charging them with bad faith. We had, therefore, to find out a formula which could be acceptable to them and at the same time safeguard the Congress position. We took good care to make sure that they were good reliable people and when we were assured of that and of their support we consented to the formation of the Ministry in which we included one of them for stability. I think the Ministry will be stable and will gain more and more

adherents. In the first place there are some election petitions which may be decided against some sitting members. A by-election is expected to give a chance to the Congress party. In this way some more seats may be captured for the Congress. Then we had talks with some erstwhile supporters of Sir A. Qaum. They have also promised support. In this way the Congress party is likely to gain more support.

There are four ministers one of whom is from the Democratic Party and the other three from the Congress party. In the Congress party itself there was difference of opinion and many of the members wanted one Mr. Samijan, while others including the Khan brothers preferred Kazi Ataullah in whom both Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Dr. Khansaheb have unbounded faith. With regard to the Hindu minister also there was a difference between Dr. C.C. Ghosh who is the oldest Congressman in the Province and Mr. Bhanjuram who has been appointed after considering the whole thing and discussing the whole situation with the Khan brothers. We thought it best to be guided in this matter by their advice and opinion, and so Qazi Ataullah and Mr. Bhanjuram Gandhi were selected. I hope the little flutter in the party about the selection of ministers has died down. There is one thing which gives us some little anxiety. None of the ministers has any administrative experience and this may well prove a handicap against them. We have asked them to have good efficient Parliamentary Secretaries and I hope they will select the ablest men available.

As regards your reference to the Associated Press I do not know if anything can be done in the matter. The Province of Orissa is undoubtedly poor and they are naturally trying to cut down the expenses. So instead of doubling the cost they have cut it down altogether. But if you think anything should be done I may write to them to reconsider the matter.

The Cawnpore¹ situation has become very complicated. The committee of which I was appointed the president has to enquire into the question of wages which, as you know, is always a large and difficult question to tackle. But having accepted it I am prepared to go on with the enquiry. But in the meantime some other complications have arisen which has made the position very difficult. When the general strike was called off, an agreement was arrived at one of the terms of which was that there should be no victimisation and there would be no strike while the enquiry was going on. Soon after the settlement some workers were dismissed. There was a stay-in-strike and then the employers declared a lockout in three of the mills which is still continuing. More than ten thousand workers are out of employment. I was anxious to have a settlement so that the general enquiry may proceed in a calm atmosphere. But this attempt failed. The Enquiry Committee has framed the questionnaire and parties have taken time for submitting their answer. So the Committee is not going to sit till 20th of October. But in the meantime if the tension grows it is just possible that strike or lockout may extend to other mills.

I was at Cawnpore yesterday for setting the questionnaire. I came here last

night to discuss the situation with Pantji. I am going away to Patna tomorrow.
Else alright. Hoping you are well.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad.

¹ Kanpur.

106. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

22nd September 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 17th instant. On the whole you have done what was best under the circumstances in the Frontier. But want of experience will be a great handicap for the Congress Ministry there and from experience I find that the Parliamentary Secretaries are more a hindrance than help. It is next to impossible to carry on a vigorous administration without any men having sound experience and contact with the past. But I suppose there is no help at present.

I had a letter from Pantji and I find that he has no peace of mind and he is not sure of the future. It seems there are elements who believe in indiscipline and violence. Similar elements are also likely to give trouble in Bombay. Unless we are able to control communist elements in the labour areas such as Bombay, Sholapur, Cawnpore, and Calcutta, we will sooner or later be faced with a very unpleasant situation. I do not know the position in your Province, but some time ago I read a report in the Press wherein it was said that some District Officer had to order a lathi-charge on some rowdy kisan demonstration. Such kisan demonstrations are being organised in Maharashtra by Indu Lal Yagnik, in your Province by Swami Sahajanand, and in Andhra by Prof. Ranga. They are trying to discredit the Congress Ministry by taking crowds of kisans to the Assembly Chambers with impossible and extravagant demands. They are all working in the name of the All India Kisan Organisation.

I have just returned from Bardoli after finishing the President's tour in Gujarat. It was very strenuous but, all the same, very exciting and interesting. We presented a purse of Rs. 76,000 to him out of which Rs. 56,000 were earmarked for the Kamala Nehru Memorial Fund.

About the middle of next month we have to lay the foundation of the Congress Pandal and the Nagar and to have the first Flag Salutation ceremony at the Congress site at Haripura, for which I had asked Jawaharlal to come for a day. He writes to me today that he will have to go to Punjab from the 9th and hence he

would not be able to come to Haripura. I have asked him again suggesting, if necessary, to change the date to suit his convenience. But if he does not agree, I may have to trouble you to come down for a day.

I just read in today's paper that the U.P. Government has appointed a tribunal for deciding the question of the 5 workmen who were dismissed, but I do not know whether this will solve the problem and end the trouble. It seems that the situation there is much more complicated.

Are you going to attend the meeting of the Education Conference to be held at Wardha next month? What is this report about your nomination in the Senate? It sounds curious. Why not then agree to shoulder the responsibility of ministry there, in case you agree to accept that nomination?

I hope you are keeping good health.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

107. To Raja Narendranath, M.L.A., Punjab

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat
Patna
24th Sep. 1937

My dear Raja Saheb,

I thank you for your letter of the 16th Sep. 1937. The controversy which has arisen between Mr. Jinnah and myself has forced certain discourse including the terms of formula which we had evolved in 1935. The controversy at present has no particular value and is not likely to end in settlement. Mr. Jinnah threw the blame on the Congress for not agreeing to the formula of 1935. I retorted that it was acceptable to the Congress but that Mr. Jinnah insisted on its acceptance by Pt. Malaviyaji and other Hindu leaders. So its failure came about. I would, therefore, put you at ease immediately that it is not going to be concluded at present.

As regards the discussion that we had in Delhi in 1935, I will remind you that most of the conversations that you had was with Sardar Vallabhbhai and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai and I was present on some occasions. The paper which you signed is also not with me but with one of them. Your acceptance was subject to the condition that agreement should be accepted by Sikhs also. The terms of the formula were the same as have been published now. The question of differential franchise was discussed at length and in fact the negotiation broke down on that account.

The Sikhs and Bengal Hindus would not accept it and Mr. Jinnah would not give it up. Pt. Malaviyaji had some other objections too. I think we could have

got it through if the Sikhs and Bengalis did not take that attitude on this point of differential franchise. I am afraid, therefore, that you are under a misapprehension. However, the question is of no importance at present.

I have not visited Punjab since 1935 when I saw you at your house at Lahore. I have read from time to time what has appeared in the Press but cannot claim to be fully acquainted with the situation there. Some days ago I just passed through the Punjab to the N.W.F.P. but could not make time to stop in Punjab. I had some correspondence with Lala Desh Bandhu Gupta some time ago regarding the Panipat affair. I am somewhat surprised to learn that the present ministry is not acting as fairly as was to be expected. I was under the impression that Mr. Manohar Lal, one of the ministers, enjoys the confidence of the Hindus and he along with the other Hindu and Sikh ministers was able to exert influence on the administration to keep things going straight. I fear the situation, therefore, is complicated by division amongst Hindus and Sikhs themselves. It is, therefore, not possible to put the entire blame on the Prime Minister alone. The Cabinet as a whole must share the responsibility for Government policy, and if the ministers are dissatisfied they should make it known. The position then will be clearer and it will appear to the world outside that it is purely a communal ministry that is functioning there. What with the ministry having no less than three non-Muslims and what with all the attempts which are published in the Press of Sir Sikandar to solve the communal problems? The general impression created outside is that the communal tangle is somehow getting solved. But I gather from your letter that that is not so, and in that case it is only right that the world should know it. It is difficult for a man in my position to be of much help. We can act only through our organisation, Congress; and the Congress is not very strong among members of any community in the Punjab. Not that we do not wish to help those who are being unfairly dealt with but we find ourselves really very much handicapped. I hope things will improve. I shall be ever ready to be of any service that I may.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

108. To Vallabhbhai Patel

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
28th September 1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received your letter of the 22nd last. I followed to some extent the tour of the President in your Province. It was rousing reception that you gave, the contribution to the Kamala Memorial Fund was handsome and as it should have been.

I was at Lucknow on three occasions and had long conversations with Pantji. He is very much worried. Apart from the work which in itself is very heavy and taxing he has had the labour trouble as also the general atmosphere which prevails all cause him anxiety. He was very much upset by the demonstrations which followed the release of the Kakori prisoners and he was telling me that his warnings as also those of the President not to indulge in them was not heeded. He feels that our sheet anchor is non-violence and anything which in any way undermines it should not be permitted. He is anxious that the Congress policy, though clear and unambiguous in this respect, needs to be reiterated time and again. I have felt that although Congress ministers have taken office and are carrying on administration in seven Provinces, Congressmen generally, even members of legislature, do not realise yet that their party is in office and that members of that party have certain responsibilities and obligations. They have not been able to adjust themselves to the changed circumstances and the mentality of opposition persists. Many questions are asked, many resolutions sought to be moved and many speeches made which could, with better grace, have come from the opposition rather than from the backbenchers. But I hope in course of time this phase will disappear. But the thing that worries me more is the desire manifested in certain quarters to force the hands of the ministry. This is based essentially on distrust of ministers' intentions for which there is hardly any justification. No one expected that ministers would have carried out the entire programme in six or seven weeks' time and yet this is what is charged against them. Complications are created by various kinds of people, e.g. in my Province the question of the National Flag is assuming an importance. In many schools and boarding houses students have by resolutions of their own put it up and the authorities, whether private or semi-official, have not interfered. In some cases, however, there has been interference and trouble has followed. The other day the students of the G.B.B. College, Muzaffarpur, hoisted the flag and there was trouble, with the details of which I am not acquainted. The college was originally a private institution but for many years it has received large Government grants and yearly aid. A member of the I.E.S. is appointed its Principal and there is transfer and exchange of Professors between this college and the Government College. The present Principal is Mr. H.R. Bhateja, a Sindhi, and a member of the I.E.S. I think we must definitely state that the National Flag should not be hoisted on any building the proprietor or the manager of which does not permit it. Apart from clashes, which its hoisting on unauthorised places causes, this action also brings the flag itself into disrespect. I have seen that in some districts the Bar Associations have passed resolutions for hoisting the flag on their buildings in the teeth of opposition of the Musalman members who being in the minority have walked out as protest. I do not understand what useful purpose is served by this kind of action.

Similarly the Bande Mataram song is objected to by some Musalmans on the ground that it is an invocation to Hindu goddess and in terms it means idol worship which Musalmans can never agree to. While there are Musalmans who

do not look upon the song in this light, there is no doubt a feeling among them not to accept it as National Song just as many of them do not accept the tricolour as the National Flag. It seems there is going to be widespread opposition to the National Flag and the Bande Mataram song and this opposition gains strength from thoughtless and inopportune action of our workers and sympathisers at certain places. I think that in this connection also our policy should be laid down in unmistakable terms.

The position of the Kisan Sabha is becoming more and more anomalous. I understand that in my Province 61 members of the Assembly have submitted to the Prime Minister a signed representation regarding the Kisan demands. In the district of Muzaffarpur some meetings were held at which some Kisan Sabha workers, who are also prominent Congressmen, delivered speeches and in some of them resolutions were passed asking the members who had refused to sign the aforesaid representation to do so or to resign. This happened in two or three constituencies. I am not in possession of the details and have asked for them. This indicates the way the wind is blowing.

I do not propose to trouble you with the labour situation at Cawnpore. The Govt. has appointed a judge to deal with some cases of victimisation and he may deal with other cases if any arise. I suggested this to keep the Committee free to tackle the larger question of wage-cuts etc. That inquiry is likely to be complicated but if I am not troubled with these interim disputes I may hope to be able to deal with it although the subject is unfamiliar.

The seat of the Senate of the Patna University was offered to me by Dr. Mahmood, the Minister of Education, and Mr. S. Sinha, the V.C. of the Patna University. Both of them pressed me hard to take it up. I referred the matter to Bapu who said that I should accept it and thus try through the University to give effect to our scheme of educational reform and I am a member now.

Ever since the last meeting of the Working Committee I have been overworked. What with the Frontier visit, the Cawnpore enquiry which has necessitated three visits in a fortnight to Cawnpore and Lucknow, what with pressing engagements in the Province, I have not been able to attend to my correspondence regularly. Correspondence too is becoming more and more unmanageable. Last night I was returning from Calcutta where I had gone for a few hours on my way back from the coalfields when I felt thoroughly exhausted. Again I am expected tonight to go to Lucknow for a Conference which has been convened by the Governments of the U.P. and Bihar to deal with the question of sugar industry and sugarcane. This question also has a very great importance both to millowners and the sugarcane cultivators and I have been invited by the Government. With my experience of last night I am feeling somewhat doubtful if I should go there as I apprehend a complete breakdown of my health. But even if I am able to keep this engagement I propose to do nothing else after the 3rd October up to the 15th October except staying at some quiet place. On the 16th, 17th, 18th we have meetings of the Provincial Working Committee and the Kisan Enquiry Committee and from the 20th the Cawnpore Enquiry Committee

commenccs. So I fear it will not bc possible for me to come to Gujarat. I hope you will please excuse mc, and why should you require anyone else to do it? Trusting you are well.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

I am inclosing a copy of a letter which I have issued to the leaders of the Congress party in Bihar, Orissa and Assam. I think it would be well if you get similar reports from the other Provinces, also including those where the Congress is not in office. You may, if you approve it, issue similar letters to the other Provinces also.

After writing the above I have received your another letter. I am sorry I have to request you to excuse me. I am afraid I am not going to the Educational Conference at Wardha as the Cawnpore Enquiry Committee is to meet from the 20th onwards and is likely to take time. The Committee has, however, decided to stop its work for a few days to enable me to attend the meetings of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C.

Enclosure not included.

109. From Mira Ben¹

Segaon
Wardha
30.9.37

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Bapu wishes me to write to you to ask your advice about a young Bihari widow called Radhika who is at the Mahila Ashram. She came here the other day to see Bapu and asked him to help her. Bapu cannot remember what it is she wants, and in any case wishes to have your information and opinion before doing anything.

You will be glad to know that Bapu is much better in health. The blood pressure is normal and the general condition is good. Only he is rather weak and easily gets tired. But he is taking care. Of course the work is heavier than ever nowadays.

I trust you are keeping good health yourself—this is the most trying season. I am very well and thankful to be back at full work.

Yours,
Mira

¹Originally known as Madeleine Slade. Daughter of an English admiral, she read about Mahatma Gandhi's work, and begged him to let her join him. Later she became a member of Gandhi's ashram at Wardha and remained there until his assassination in 1948.

110. From Mira Ben

Segaon
Wardha
1-10-37

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Bapu wishes me to write and say that he will be very glad if you are able to attend the Educational Conference which is going to be held in Wardha on October 22nd and 23rd and over which Bapu is going to preside.

He does not want to press you unduly, but it would be a comfort to him if you could come.

Bapu is giving a great deal of time and thought to this education problem at present.

Yours,
Mira

111. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

2nd October 1937

My dear Rajendra Prasad Babu,

I have received your letter of the 28th September 1937 and I see your difficulties about your coming to Gujarat. But I am more worried and distressed about your health, you must go away somewhere for a fortnight where it would not be possible for people to approach you. This Cawnpore business will put terrible strain on you.

I can neither understand nor appreciate the attempts that are being made in various places to hoist the National Flag on buildings against the wishes of their proprietors. To hoist the flag on buildings of Bar Associations has no meaning. In fact I regard it as an unseemly demonstration of our intolerance.

The Kisan Sabha will give much greater trouble in future and my opinion has always definitely been against its formation. Such rival organisations are bound to destroy the Congress prestige. Congressmen are forced to join these kisan organisations by the atmosphere created by the organisers. They are waiting for a time when they could displace us, that is why I have given them no quarters and they have always been attacking me mercilessly. We must face this issue fairly and squarely at Calcutta. A few months later we will not be able to control the situation created by them.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

112. *From Mahatma Gandhi*

Wardha

October 5, 1937

RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUATASHRAM
PATNA

HOPE YOU ARE WELL AND WILL ATTEND EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE 22ND
23RD HERE SAME TIME LABOUR COMMITTEE MEETING CAWNPORE HOPE CAN
POSTPONE SAME

GANDHI

113. *To Sri Krishna Sinha*

BIHAR PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

P.O. Ziradei (Dt. Saran)
5th October 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

The first session of the Assembly is over. I know you have had somewhat strenuous time with the Assembly which had been sitting from day to day. The experiences gained must be valuable. Our efforts should be to keep the electorate fully informed of what has been done and what is contemplated. I, therefore, urge you to undertake a tour of your constituency and to explain to your constituents the proceedings of the Assembly and the programme which the ministry has been following and proposes to follow in pursuance of the Congress programme. Thus, for example, there is considerable consternation amongst the Zamindars on account of the proposal to amend the Tenancy Act and to tax the agricultural income. On the other hand it is represented in certain quarters that the ministry has not been as active as it should have been, that the proposed amendments do not go far enough. There is also further a risk of communal tension. On all these points the Congress programme and activities should be explained and I have no doubt that the masses at large, not Hindus and Musalmans, will be pleased to learn what is being done. I, therefore, urge that you should undertake a tour as soon as possible and send reports of your activities to the Provincial Office.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

114. From Khan Bahadur Mohammad Ismail,¹ M.L.C., Bihar

CONFIDENTIAL

Ismail Manzil,
Patna City
8th October 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I thank you very much for your very kind letter from your village home Ziradei, Distt. Saran, where you are on a short rest from your over-worried activities and overtaxed energy. I hope and trust the rest will do you good and that you would soon return to your normal activities.

I fully appreciate all what you have said in your letter under reply. I am simply surprised as to how the news of our informal, friendly and frank discussion at the Regis Hotel at the invitation of Dr. Mahmud finds publicity most incorrectly reported not only in the two English papers of Patna but also in an issue of the *Star of India*, Calcutta, dated 2nd October 1937. As I am not a regular subscriber of the *Star of India* but get it only whenever the local agents of the newspapers bring it, I am not in a position yet to get hold of the paper dated 2nd October. My friend, the Editor of the *Searchlight*, has promised to lend me the copy. Even the news that was published in the *Searchlight* and *The Indian Nation* was not correct and I really fail to understand who was responsible for giving publicity. I had therefore written to both the papers. *The Indian Nation* in its issue dated 1st October, page 2, column 5; has published my letter. I am, however, sending you a copy.

It is indeed very unfortunate that the Indian National Congress, the only well organised, most disciplined and most influential body in the whole of India, which alone can claim credit for all the advancement and subsequent achievements in the country, is being misunderstood and attacked by those who belonged to the Indian National Congress from the Khilafat days of 1919. (We of the moderate section who previously belonged to the Indian National Congress still regard it with reverence and respect, however much we may disagree with its methods.) I find that Maulana Shaukat Ali, Hasrat Mohani and Zaffar Ali Khan, who were rabid and blind followers, are now the bitterest enemies. The community of the Musalmans in the whole of India is being misled, misguided and misdirected. Please pardon my saying that this state of affairs is in evidence since 1929 as before that even the Jinnah section of the Muslim League was entirely in sympathy with the Congress. I may refer you to the Calcutta sitting of the League held in December 1927 and again in December 1928. It was after the result of the Lahore Session of the Congress that the sympathy of the Musalmans was alienated. Please pardon my saying frankly that a great blunder has been committed. The thing has been spoilt and enemies have taken advantage of it, and the time-servers and self-seekers exploited their objects—the result is

deplorable. Now everything is taken advantage of and is being objected. To create misunderstanding and to destroy the honest intention is very easy but to pave the way for mutual understanding is most difficult and every attempt made at it is being destroyed by self-seekers. I am absolutely willing to cooperate with you in the removal of all misunderstandings and in creating a healthy atmosphere. I shall look into the writings of the *Star of India* and shall make a public statement in consultation with others. But please pardon my saying plainly that it is very unfortunate that the Congress Government have started their regime on the strength of the majority in the legislature without least care to maintain friendly relations between the different classes, communities and interests. I am not unreasonable nor am I selfish but I do feel and must say that the two measures, namely, of (i) taxation and the other of (ii) reducing the income is most unjust, unfair and unwarranted, more particularly when my House, the Upper Chamber, was so disrespected as not to be consulted in these matters: (1) the resolution regarding the Constituent Assembly, (2) resolution regarding the agricultural income-tax. Now pray excuse me what does it show? Does it not indicate that the Congress Government ignores the existence of the Upper Chamber? If not, why are we not consulted? Are we not humans? Are we not capable of advancing views? Is there no precedence in India itself when similar resolutions of vital importance were discussed both in the Legislative Assembly and in the Council of State, not to speak of the Dominion Parliaments where both Houses are always consulted? I submit that the Congress Government can expect cooperation only if they will show scrupulous regard for the wishes of all. Governments do not exist for a group or for a class. Please pardon my submitting very friendly and frankly what I honestly feel. I do not ascribe any motive, far be it my intention.

Now turning again to the burning question as to how to remove the differences between Hindus and Muslims, both the intelligentsia and the masses, is a matter which deserves serious consideration and is a matter which is the duty of all patriotic Indians to remove. I feel that the meeting held on the evening of the 24th September was not properly arranged, nor ample opportunity had been given to all to have their say. The whole thing was hastily done, hence taken advantage of by the enemies to misinterpret and to suppress the real fact. However, I shall discuss with you how to solve this problem when you return first alone at any place fixed by you and then as we decide.

There are some other matters, for instance the singing of "Bande Mataram" song in schools and in gatherings which though not new is being misinterpreted. This matter also requires further thinking over. The writing in a local vernacular paper called *The Muslim* is being objected to by 90 per cent of the Musalmans in Bihar and my friend of the *Star of India* who has been recently touring some of the districts of Behar is considered a new "Masih" and a saviour of Muslim interests. He has been speaking and writing things which he could not have done unless material was supplied from Behar. It distressed me to read the account of the Zamindars' meeting held at Chapra. It is alleged that the local Congress

Committee did not behave well and created rowdyism. It is the legitimate right of every citizen to submit his grievances and it is not befitting the Government party to resort to hooliganism. I hope and trust you will make a sifting enquiry to find out the truth. This is another unfortunate incident the truth of which must be found and misunderstandings removed. I hope you will kindly excuse me for writing this long letter but I felt it my duty to make the position clear.

When the typed copy was almost ready I got a copy of the *Star of India* dated 2nd October and I am distressed to read the report published therein particularly the headline at page 7, column 4, "Mr. R. Prasad Defends Bande Mataram: New Fuel to Muslim Fire of Indignation". It is supposed to be written by the *Star of India*'s own correspondent from Patna. Further on, it is alleged that your defence intensified the spirit of opposition and so on and did not produce any favourable impression. The latter portion is still worse. However, we shall discuss about it but it is obvious that the whole article is inspired by someone from Patna and the materials must have been supplied after Mr. Atkinson's visit to the place as he came to Patna on the 29th September and addressed a meeting of the students that evening. On the 2nd he was at Chapra. Therefore, it is clear that someone besides myself who never attended any of the meetings and only met him at Mr. Aziz's place at tea on the evening of the 3rd must have induced him to write these inflammable materials. The whole thing is very unfortunate, regrettable and deplorable from the country's point of view. I feel that not much can be done by correspondence. I shall, therefore, personally discuss with you and others on the right course and right line of action. I hope and trust that Dasahra will pass off peacefully everywhere. The flames of the material are being spread mostly in the districts of Gaya, Monghyr, Chapra and also in the town of Patna. The educational institutions are being infected by its germs. The whole Muslim community, except only about 5 p.c., is against Congress somehow at present.

With kind regards and best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Ismail

¹A Muslim leader of Bihar.

115. From Mira Ben

Segaon
Wardha
10-10-37

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Your letter of 7th has come. I hope very much you will, after all, be able to attend the Educational Conference. Shriman is unfortunately down with a fever

which seems to be typhoid! Nayakam is helping in his place. He was here this morning and said your letter to Shriman had arrived and asked me to tell you that if you have anyone special in your mind you should bring them with you. Bapu said the same thing. He said of course the Education Ministers or their deputies will be there and other workers etc. specially interested in the subject. Special highfown educationists, as one might say, have not been asked, unless of a broad-minded type—there will be about a hundred people in all, and you should bring any special person or persons you may have in mind.

I trust your health has improved with the little rest you took. Here the weather is perfect.

Yours,
Mira

P.S. Many thanks for your letter regarding Radhika.

116. To Vallabhbhai Patel

P.O. Ziradei (Dt. Saran)
10th October 1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received your two letters, one dated 2nd October and the other dated 4th October. You need not be anxious about my health. I have been here only for about a week and it has done me good. I shall be here till the 14th, going back to Patna on the 15th. I hope this short rest will make me fit for the Cawnpore Enquiry and the A.I.C.C. meetings.

I have received a telegram from Bapu asking me to attend the Educational Conference at Wardha on the 22nd and the 23rd. I am trying to get the Cawnpore Enquiry, which is to commence on the 20th, postponed till the 2nd of November. If I succeed I shall go to Wardha and from there to the A.I.C.C. and the Working Committee meetings at Calcutta.

On my way to the Frontier I stopped at Lahore station for about two hours and there met both Dr. Satyapal¹ and Dr. Gopichand² but none of them mentioned anything about their differences. As regards Dr. Gopichand's participation in the Unity Conference, on my way back I did not stop at Lahore and so had no talk with anyone of them. But one Musalman gentleman whose name I do not remember who travelled with us in the same compartment to the next station told us that the Congress work is suffering immensely on account of the activities of Dr. Gopichand and his party and he complained to me that the All India Congress Committee was not giving necessary support to Dr. Satyapal who had to fight single-handed all reactionaries and communalists. So my information is nil apart from a letter from Dr. Satyapal [see Appendix] similar to that which you have received. I have written to him that the Working Committee has given

seen the report in the *Searchlight* and *The Indian Nation* as I had gone out on my tour that very day from the meeting and missed the Bihar papers of those days. They also were not justified in publishing reports unless they were given authoritatively. My intention in writing to you was to draw your attention to the atmosphere of distrust which led to misinterpretation of events, distortion of facts. We must find out ways and means to deal with the situation which is becoming more and more complicated. The relation between the communities must be put on sound basis if ordinary peaceful relations have to be maintained. I do not think the atmosphere at the present moment will permit even a conference to be held without leading to further complications. This feeling is to some extent strengthened by the Regis Hotel meeting. But still we cannot afford to leave things alone and all good people must put their heads together to find a way out.

As regards the question of agrarian programme of the Bihar Government, that is a matter altogether apart from the communal question. There are undoubtedly differences but are of a variety altogether apart from the communal question. I feel that the Government has not acted hastily in placing before the Assembly the question of taxation of agricultural income. It is a matter which has been hanging fire for many years and the Congress Ministry is really not the only sinning party in this respect. Not to go as far as the time of Lord Curzon, within recent years the Simon Commission and the Privy Council both have ruled it in order and even before the present ministry came into existence a completely worked out scheme together with the Bill for enforcing it was made ready by the Secretariat and placed even before the last ministry which went out of office before it could deal with it. I did not know this and came to know of it from one of the ex-ministers of the Interim Cabinet. I am not sufficiently acquainted with legislative procedures to be able to say definitely if a measure like this must necessarily get the consent of the Upper House. But from what little I know my impression is that it is not customary with the British Government to place such measures of taxation before the House of Lords. Anyway what has been done is only to consult the Assembly in this matter and the actual measure will necessarily go through the procedure prescribed in the Act and the Upper House will have then no grievance.

As regards the Tenancy Bill the matter is now before the legislature and every party will have the fullest opportunity of dealing with every aspect of it. My complaint against the Zamindars is that they have not been thinking on constructive lines at all and their whole criticism is a complete negation and nothing else. They have not yet publicly given any constructive suggestion for dealing with the serious agrarian situation which prevails. There is a lack of appreciation of the seriousness of the situation and an easy-going reliance on things settling down in a satisfactory way. I fear this is not a correct attitude and is likely to end in more and more trouble. I would earnestly request you to take into consideration the situation as it is and try to meet it. If the Congress proposals are unsatisfactory the Zamindars should be prepared to propose a better solution and I am sure the Government will not fail to give it their utmost

consideration. Congress people are really between two stones, each equally relentless. You must have seen the criticism levelled against the Congress proposal and the charges of betrayal brought against the Congress by the other side. We have, therefore, to act with caution but at the same time with speed and firmness. It is never a fact that the Government is not prepared to listen to protests or suggestions and is going to decide for itself. It does not also follow that it is acting in that way because it has got a majority. In all democratic constitutions that has to be done by all Governments and the Government has to act in a way which may not satisfy all groups. But notwithstanding all these I am sure the Government will be prepared always to give the utmost consideration to all the criticisms about its measures with utmost respect and sympathy.

I shall be returning to Patna on the evening of the 16th and shall most probably be leaving Patna on the 19th or 20th. Within the three or four days that I shall be there, I shall have to attend two Committee meetings and the sugarcane conference all of which are likely to keep me quite busy. But if I can at all snatch an hour or so I shall run up to your place and have a talk with you. In case I am unable to do so, I shall be returning to Patna on 1st of November and will stay there for a few days and then meet you.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

118. From Krishna Ballabh Sahay¹

Patna
13th October 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I had been to the Hazaribagh Central Jail on the 11th to meet the political prisoners, including those who have returned from the Andamans. I was in the Jail for nearly an hour under the old *Nim* tree, where you used to sit in Ward No. 1 and I had a hearty talk with them. They were very furious that they have not as yet been released and said that they would go out with me and would see how the warders prevented it in my presence. A very uncanny situation would have been created. But I prevented it by telling them that we shall see to it that within two months they are released. I told them that the position was whether we should precipitate a crisis on that issue. If that was their wish I would convey it to you and to A.I.C.C. and after a decision to this effect was taken we would have no objection. But we prefer that they were released without crisis being precipitated. I told them that it was much better to give the country economic and agrarian relief first rather than fight and finish over the question of their release over

which we must have to fight after agrarian relief had been given. This did not I told them, however, mean that they were to rot in Jail for a very long time. Though some of them showed impatience and were not prepared to subscribe to my argument still the sense of majority was that they would wait for two months. I am convinced that longer than that they would not wait and if they are not released by that time the ministry and the Congress will have to face a very difficult situation. Sri Babu is going to Hazaribagh on the 23rd Oct. to meet them and I shall write to you again what happens in that meeting.

You must have learnt from newspaper report that Kamal Nath Tewari has already been repatriated to the Punjab, he being a Lahore Conspiracy Case prisoner. The prisoners who returned from the Andamans to Hazaribagh told me that Kamal Nath was in good health and I think you can convey this news to his wife. The Hazaribagh prisoners also suggested that as Kamal Nath was a resident of Bihar an attempt should be made to bring him back to this Province. I am starting a file on this subject. But as Sri Babu is not here no action can be taken until he returns from Mussoorie.

I am here at Patna to watch the communal situation on the occasion of Dasahra which I hope will pass off quietly.

Yours affectionately,
Krishna Ballabh Sahay

¹Secretary of Bihar Provincial Congress in the thirties; became Parliamentary Secretary in the first Congress Provincial Government in 1937.

119. From Krishna Ballabh Sahay

Patna

14th October 1937

Dear Sir,

Your Circular No. 24 is to hand. It will not be possible for me to tour in my constituency in the near future, engrossed as I am with my duties as Parliamentary Secretary but on behalf of Government we intend to bring out a pamphlet for countrywide distribution to remove the misapprehension of the landlords and of the Musalmans.

Yours sincerely,
Krishna Ballabh Sahay

120. From Krishna Ballabh Sahay

Patna

14th October 1937

Dear Sir,

Please refer to your letter dated the 28th September, asking the Leader of the Congress Party in the Bihar Assembly to submit to you a report of work done by

the Ministers in pursuance of the Congress programme as laid down from time to time in the resolutions of the Congress and A.I.C.C.

I regret that on account of my being engrossed with the work of the Assembly I could not comply with your letter up till now. I hope I shall be able to supply you a report by the 26th October.

Yours sincerely,
Krishna Ballabh Sahay

121. *From Khan Bahadur Mohammad Ismail, M.L.C., Bihar*

CONFIDENTIAL

Ismail Manzil

Patna City

17th October 1937.

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I thank you for your letter dated 12th October in reply to my letter. I am busy in connection with a domestic household ceremony between the 20th of October till the 29th of October. Therefore, I shall not be in a position during these 10 days to discuss with you on the subject matter of our correspondence. The best time will be the beginning of November.

I have carefully perused the contents of your letter and however much I may respect your honesty of purpose in trying to remove minority grievances and however much I am willing to cooperate with you and your party on terms honourable, I regret I cannot persuade myself to reconcile to your views. No doubt under the Government of India Act initiative must be taken in the Lower House in connection with all Money Bills, the same reason cannot be advanced in support of any resolution, particularly a resolution connected with the proposal to replace the present Constitution by another to be decided by a Constituent Assembly. Both in the Mother of Parliament and in the Dominion Parliaments of Canada, Australia and other smaller Dominions instances are not wanting when effect has never been given to such a procedure without consulting both the Houses where they exist and in support of my contention I refer to "Dicey" "Keith" and "Bryce" *Constitutional Law and History of British Sovereignty*. However, I have my own views just as you have. I think and I feel that my House is disrespectfully treated in this matter as well as in the matter of Agricultural Income Tax. I regret when you refer to Lord Curzon's Resolution of 18th March 1902. While you refer to that I refer you to Mr. R.C. Dutt's Rejoinder and to the Board of Revenue Bengal's reply on that question—pages 65 to 72 of the Resolution in question. While Lord Curzon and other officials have described high percentage of rates and rents in Bengal, Bihar they have never suggested the indiscriminate reduction of rent nor the imposition of Agricultural Income Tax. At the same time I am aware what the Rent Law Committee of 1882, the Indian

Taxation Committee, the Simon Report and, more recently, the Joint Select Committee had stated. What they have stated is a possible means of income and not an immediate imposition. In this matter I can never agree with your Government and I shall fight to the last knowing my weakness in the Lower Chamber. I want the posterity to be the judge and the impartial world to be the witness.

When you say, Sir, that Tenancy Legislation was not rushed through I respectfully submit and in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "with all humility", that I have never known such an important Amending Bill being rushed through in 24 hours and here I illustrate how the matter stands. On Saturday the 25th of September at 12.30 p.m. the Prime Minister introduced the Amending Bill and made a long speech for over an hour; then the House was adjourned for lunch. After lunch our revered and much respected leader who has grown grey in the service of the country and whose sacrifice is in no way less than any other and to whose credit stands 13 years of administrative experience, I mean Sir Ganesh Dutt Singh, moved for circulation. Only 2 other speeches could be made when suddenly one of the members of the Government party moved closure under Rule 27, B.L.A. Rules, thereby stopping all further discussion. On the closure being carried the House was adjourned at 4 p.m. until Monday the 27th, thereby leaving no room for any further discussion on the principle of the Bill except the right of reply of the mover of the Bill and of the Amendment.

I was present as a spectator and listened to the debate and also heard what poor old Sir Ganesh had in his luck. The Bill was referred not to the Joint Select Committee but to the Select Committee of the Assembly, thereby shutting the door for the Upper Chamber to discuss it dispassionately in the Select Committee. May I submit what course is left for us now other than to reject the Bill or to make amendment in the full Council. With this sort of attitude, cooperation cannot be forced. Patriotism is not the monopoly of the members of a single Chamber. We have many grievances. However, I do not ask you to redress it. I am only placing it in a most friendly way and that too as an Indian. I know my responsibilities as a legislator and I shall do what is conscientiously fair but as one who had always wished that majority party shall come into power and shall work for the good of all do feel—resented and repented.

As regards the minority problem I am afraid the thing is daily getting worse and worse. Whoever may be responsible and whatever may be the reason the fact cannot be denied that in Bihar in particular there is no single Musalman who can claim credit for having the community at his command and under his influence as on account of certain reasons and personal considerations, though they have one object in view only, their personal motive precludes them from differing their fusions and to listen to the least interested. I admit this is defeatist mentality but I have to face it. What was not popular in Behar last year is most popular today, namely the influence of the All India Muslim League and as such, as one belonging to the community know in which direction the wind is blowing. I assure you that I am neither sentimental nor emotional. I am subtle in my

political views and conviction. The Congress has much to gain by meeting the wishes of the minority but on account of their mentality of the numerical strength they are adamant. This is not a provincial problem which the so-called leader of this place can solve. It is an all-India problem and has assumed a vast magnitude beyond conception. This is my firm conviction and as I have to live with my community, work with my community, die with my community I shall, therefore, have to respect their wishes and sentiments whatever may be my own personal feeling and please excuse my very plain and frank talking. The whole correspondence shall be kept secret and I close with the prayer that impasse may yet be removed.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Ismail

122. From Dr. Satyapal, Lahore

19 October 1937

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
CONGRESS
PATNA

COOPERATION WITH UNITY CONFERENCE UNDESIRABLE AS LONG ARRESTS
PROSECUTIONS AND RESTRAINTS CONTINUE PLEASE CAREFULLY CONSIDER
THIS ASPECT BEFORE DECIDING THIS QUESTION

SATYAPAL

123. From Khan Bahadur Mohammad Ismail, M.L.C., Bihar

Ismail Manzil
Patna City
19th October 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I write to express to you my most grateful thanks for your kind thought of me and of my humble efforts towards reconciliation and ramifications in the cause of my country. Personally I hold a very strong view but I regret both the Zamindars and the Musalmans are at present diverting their energies in wrong channels. I shall always do my very best to avoid chances of friction.

I have carefully read Mr. Jinnah's address and searched in vain to find something for the guidance of Musalmans and found to my regret nothing but hatred towards the Congress. Even poor Sir Wazir Hasan, who is an ex-President of the League, is so disgracefully treated. I have written very strongly on this question to the Press. God save the Musalmans of Behar if they are to be guided under the Muslim League's banner by Khan Bahadur Ibrahim, Ghazi

Jafar Imam and Ghazi Badruddin the former whose whole ambition in life is to worship at the official shrine. Let Mr. Jinnah come to Patna as is reported and then I shall have a heart-to-heart talk with him. I know the atmosphere very well, yet I shall put up an honourable fight.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Ismail

124. To Dr. Satyapal

Sadaquat Ashram,
Patna
20-10-37

My dear Doctor Satyapal,

I received your telegram as also your letter dated the 27th September regarding Sir Sikandar Hayat's¹ Unity Conference. There was no resolution passed at the meeting of the Working Committee regarding the Unity Conference nor, so far as I remember, was Dr. Gopichand given any particular authority in the matter. The discussions related to the position of the Congress party in the Provinces where it is in minority and the resolution which arose particularly out of a reference from Bengal was that while the Congress party was at liberty to act in cooperation with other parties in such Legislatures in furtherance of the Congress programme, it should not commit itself to the formation of ministries without the sanction of the Working Committee. The Committee naturally acquainted itself with the circumstances prevailing in the various Provincial Legislatures from the reports given by the Provincial leaders but nothing more was done. So I do not think there was anything that Doctor Gopichand could have communicated to Sir Sikandar Hayat. But it would be best to refer to the President to find out what it was that he could possibly communicate to Sir Sikandar.

I do not think the Working Committee has even considered the question of joining or blessing Sir Sikandar's Conference. If anything emerges it may consider it. But there can be no question of overruling or ignoring the Provincial Committee or yourself. But I suppose you must have conveyed your wishes in this respect to the President also. I have no doubt he will let the Committee know the position and advise it if any occasion arises so as to avoid all misunderstandings.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

¹Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan—President of the Unionist Party and Premier of Punjab in 1937.

125. From B. Shiva Rao

7 Barakhamba Road
New Delhi
3rd November 1937

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I am very sorry I missed you both in Patna and Calcutta. I was hoping to have a quiet talk with you. Watching the proceedings of the A.I.C.C. meetings, I felt that something must be done by the Working Committee to prevent the left-wing elements from embarrassing Congress ministries. No one made the point clearly that if political prisoners are to be released and all repressive legislation repealed, the Congress party as a whole, right or left, has a definite responsibility in the matter. Instead of embarrassing the ministers, they should cooperate with them to the utmost extent possible. I really see no reason why the defence of the ministries should be apologetic and not vigorous. I think the Provincial and District Congress Committees in all the Provinces should definitely be asked that Congress speakers keep to Congress principles—non-violence, particularly amongst them.

Another matter which struck me somewhat forcibly is the absence of a detailed statement on behalf of the Congress ministries in the seven Provinces. I think it is absolutely essential and imperative that such a comprehensive statement should be published in the form of a pamphlet as soon as possible. I was glad to see something attempted on those lines on behalf of the U.P. Cabinet and the pamphlet was distributed at the meeting of the A.I.C.C. But even that was not precise enough: for instance, instead of saying the vast majority of the political prisoners have been released it should say there were so many political prisoners when the Congress took office, so many have been released and the cases of so many more are under consideration. I took the liberty of mentioning this to Babu Sri Krishna Sinha, Mr. Kher and Dr. Khare. Such a pamphlet will have a very great effect. In the first place, the public and, of course, the Congress party itself, will realise what has been done or is being done by Congress ministries. Secondly, the facts contained in such a pamphlet would be very helpful for Congress propagandists in addressing meetings. The Labour Party headquarters in London issue every week cards to their speakers in the different constituencies giving them points, both for vindicating their own programme and for attacking that of the opponents. Congress ministers alone cannot undertake this task. I think most of them are really overworked at present. You must have, in each Province, a certain number of men who will speak for the Congress ministries and thus keep Congress propaganda on right and sound lines. I am afraid there is far too much criticism of the Congress ministries at present; and such criticism, proceeding from Congressmen, is bound to weaken the party machine as a whole.

I am taking the liberty of writing this to you because of the honour you have

done me in the past of allowing me to discuss matters of policy with you. I wish very much I had seen you somewhere: there are so many points I would like to bring to your notice. I greatly regret your recent illness and trust that you will soon be restored to health.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. Shiva Rao

126. From Vallabhbhai Patel

Bardoli

11th November 1937

RAJENDRA BABU
CONGRESS PATNA

CONSULTED BHULABHAI REGARDING YOUR PROPOSAL DALMIAS NOMINATION WE BOTH STRONGLY DISAPPROVE ANY BUT CONGRESSMAN PRESENT JUNCTURE

VALLABHBHAI

127. From Gopinath Bardoloi

Congress House, Gauhati
Nov. 13th, 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I am sorry I could not write to you earlier. My daughter who had a very serious attack of typhoid fever and was yet unable to move out of bed, had again an infection of malignant malaria. It was God's goodwill which was probably responsible for making me unwilling to go to meet you in Calcutta. Thank God, she has now been declared out of danger by the doctors.

I had a fairly long discussion with Maulana Azad Saheb regarding the political situation in our Province and if you had any conversation with him you might have been made aware of the same. I had also a note left through Sj. Omeo Kumar Das with Mr. Bhulabhai Desai for giving the same to Patelji for discussion. I do not know whether you had any chance to discuss it. My idea was to have our matters discussed in the working committee through you and accordingly thought of meeting you. I, therefore, took the earliest opportunity of going to Calcutta to meet you with that object. But of course I came away as soon as I heard that you were not coming at all.

Lest you might not get the points on which we want to have your advice, I again send herewith another copy. Private conversation would have cleared

many things, but, as it is, we have no option but to rely on your written directions. To put our objective in a word, we want 12 or more Congress members of the Assembly in order to convert ourselves into a majority. There are two ways of doing this:

- (1) By directly approaching the members of the Assembly and convincing them of our programme.
- (2) By convincing the electorates to make their representatives join the Congress.

Communal feeling and preaching are preventing many Mohammedan members from joining the Congress party, while they are not feeling the pressure from their constituencies as well as they should have done. I am told the Sylhet Mohammedan masses are Congress minded and intensive propaganda amongst them by distinguished Mohammedan leaders like the Maulana Saheb and Maulana Abdul Ghaffar Khan may result in converting them into Congressmen. To me this latter method is a far superior and super one than directly approaching the members who are not always influenced by the only consideration of doing good to their constituencies. It is for this reason that I suggested a tour by those two worthies.

There were other questions which also required discussion, e.g. this "Line System". It would appear that the Muslim League has made it their communal question, and naturally they want Assam also to be a Muslim Province just like Bengal. But view this matter entirely from a different point of view. The economic problem of the Province is bound up with this system. We cannot think that in the near future we shall have no spot of earth for our children and ultimately for ourselves and we shall be driven to the solution of acute difficulties which face some other Provinces. The linguistic problem also increases the difficulties of an economic government, and what is worse, a source of constant friction resulting in violence, incendiarism and crimes of all kinds, naturally disturb the peace in society. Have you given any thought to this subject? If the Karachi resolutions are literally interpreted, the immigrants have every right to acquire land, property, etc., and there cannot be a "Line System". On the other hand, our people, whether Congressmen or otherwise, all feel that adequate reservation must be there. The Congress members who have been allowed to join in a committee for an enquiry, have been expressly directed to stress that viewpoint. Secondly, we also think that it is not by an enquiry that such a problem can be solved; it would require propaganda among both the communities. These are problems the solution of which surely required direction from you. Will you kindly advise us?

The Members' Salary Bill has been thrown out and a daily allowance of Rs. 10 has been substituted. The matter will come again to the Assembly. Shall we vote for this amendment?

I do not feel much justified in disturbing you in your bad health. But to whom

shall we look for guidance? I feel All India Congress Committee does not take as much interest in Assam affairs as is necessary. This may be due to our not having any member on the Working Committee, or our not taking part in all-India affairs; but I feel it is to Provinces like ours that A.I.C.C. should give attention.

Hope I do not bore you and earnestly praying to God for your health and my humble good wishes for the same.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath Bardoloi
Leader, Congress Party, Assam

128. From Thakur Bimla Pd. Singh

V. & P.O. Bhairopur Deorhi
T.O. Hajipur
Dist. Muzaffarpur
The 16th November 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

The whole Province in general and the community of Zamindars residing in it in particular are deeply indebted to you for your strenuous efforts at bringing about a compromise between the Zamindars and the tenants so far as the Tenancy legislation and the proposed income-tax on agriculture are concerned. However, one thing very abnormal is striking my mind and I cannot but place it before you so that I be satisfied with a suitable answer on this point. When Congress is committed to the creed of non-violence in letter and spirit and has maintained a record of unflinching adherence to this principle, I am greatly surprised to find it tolerating the attitude of and preaching by and at the instigation of Swami Sahajanand¹ and his lieutenants, which tend to violence from the side of tenantry towards the Zamindars. The instances of such most lawless acts are not now rare. We have the ill-luck of reading daily in newspapers, at various places in the Provinces.

The crux of the matter lies in this that Swamiji, being a member of the All India Congress Committee, is going against the proclaimed creed of the Congress, and the Congress is silent on the subject. There are many who are tempted to attribute moral responsibility of such actions on part of Swami to the Congress. Hence if the latter does not come forward to clear its position by putting restraint upon the Swami's and his lieutenants' behaviour or by censuring them and taking other disciplinary action against them, in case they do not mend their ways, the Congress itself will greatly lose the universal support it has the privilege of commanding today. I should, therefore, request you to kindly enlighten the public by issuing a manifesto in the Press on the position in question, issue strict orders to the Swami and his Sabha to refrain from irresponsible propaganda in the interior inciting the tenants to violence and ousting him and his lieutenants

from the Congress fold if they do not obey or are not inclined to.

With profound regards and wishing to be excused for this troubling you,
I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Bimla Prasad Singh
Genl. Secy.
Subdivisional Landholders' Assn., Hajipur

⁻¹ An outstanding Kisan Sabha leader in the thirties and the forties. President, Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha; also a member of A.I.C.C. at one time.

129. *From B.S. Jilani*

THE SOCIAL ORDER

A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Week

Allahabad
November 17, 1937

Revered Rajen Babuji,

Yesterday in Calcutta I discussed the flood problem of Behar with the Italian Consul General in the light of your Note which was recently published. As you know, the Italian engineers have, during the last 15 years, brought about a wonderful transformation of land by changing the course of rivers and reclamation of age-old marshy places. I am told that some 5,000,000 hectares of land are now under agriculture as a result of this tremendous scheme.

The Consul General said that some of their engineers have been advising different Governments on identical problems such as Behar faces. He mentioned the names of Dutch, French and American Governments where, on the advice of Italian experts, they have not only reclaimed lands, but set up huge hydro-electric plants for rural areas.

He also said that his Government will be happy to assist the Behar Ministry and the cost will be much lower than demanded by experts from other countries. I wonder if you will consider this suggestion and will recommend to our Premier in Behar that he should get into contact with the Italian Consulate General in Calcutta and get such information as is required before you accept Italian expert advice. The Consul General has a lot of literature which explains the work done in Italy. He also seemed willing to discuss matters personally.

As ever, your humble servant,

B.S. Jilani

130. To C. Rajagopalachari

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
19th November 1937

My dear Rajaji,

We have neither met nor corresponded for a pretty long time and both of us have also been ill. I hope you are free from your troubles and have fully recovered your strength. I am advised rest which is difficult to get.

I have wired to you today introducing the agent of Seth Ramakrishna Dalmia who wants to see you in connection with a proposal to establish a cement factory in your Presidency. Shri Dalmia is a big businessman in our Province where he has got three of the biggest sugar factories, one paper mill which is under construction, and a big cement factory which is being built. You are aware that all the cement factories in India have a combine which regulates the price of cement. Shri Dalmia is establishing a number of sugar factories in different parts of the country—one in Bihar, one somewhere in the Punjab, one in Sindh, one somewhere in Kathiawad, one he proposes in Madras Presidency and another in Central India. He is not a member of the cement combine and he is going to introduce competition where there is a monopoly now in the cement market. He has told me that he will be able to reduce the price of the cement considerably when his factories begin to operate. The Bihar factory is likely to start working within the next few months. Machinery has been imported, the factory has been constructed and the plant is being fixed. His agent will discuss the scheme of the Madras factory with you. He naturally expects opposition from the cement interest and hence needs such facilities as may be fairly given. You may know that he is a great philanthropist and is ever ready to help any deserving national cause. I hope you will give him a hearing and such help as you may.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

131. To the Consul General of Italy, Calcutta

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
20th November 1937

Dear Sir,

I understand from Mr. Jilani that in Italy the Government has been able to deal effectively in certain areas with floods and Italian engineers have been able to control and train rivers and render them useful agents of productivity instead of being the agent of destruction that some of them occasionally become during

floods. I understand also that there is some literature on the subject available. In Bihar many areas suffer heavily from floods every now and then. I shall be obliged if you be so good as to give me the address where I could get such literature in English and such other assistance as you may to enable me to get information about the subject.

I remain,

Yours truly,
Rajendra Prasad

132. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Congress House
Bombay-4
21st Nov. 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have not heard from you since we parted company at Calcutta. I have been reading reports in the Press that Maulana had come there to assist you in connection with the trouble between the tenants and the landlords.

We met at Wardha on the 18th and 19th. Probably Kripalani will come to Patna from Allahabad for a day and inform you of what we did there. Unfortunately Bapu's health is very poor and we could not even inform him of what we were doing. How is your health now? We have decided that if the experiment of office acceptance is to succeed at all, we must organise all our forces before Haripura. Unless we are strong and maintain a stable majority in the A.I.C.C., we cannot effectively work our programme. We must, therefore, contest all possible seats and return as many delegates from our group as possible. I hope you will organise from now in your Province in that direction.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

133. *To Jawaharlal Nehru*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
23-11-1937

My dear Jawaharlalji,

After you left Calcutta some landlords of Bihar met me there and wanted me to intervene and bring about a settlement of the agrarian question. As you had all

left, I spoke to Maulana Azad and we both discussed the matter with them in a general way. I requested Maulana to come to Patna and to discuss in detail the pending legislation and other matters connected with the agrarian question. He was good enough to agree to my proposal and came here. We have had prolonged discussion with Congress workers who are interested in the Kisan Sabha and representative Zamindars. As a result of these discussions we have arrived at certain conclusions which we consider to be fair, reasonable, and which can be enforced by legislation. I am enclosing a separate note dealing in detail with the provisions of the Bill and with certain other matters which are not covered by the pending Bill, but which will have to be incorporated in one or more Bills as may be found necessary. Zamindars have assured us that they would facilitate the passage of the necessary legislation in the Upper Chamber where they have a majority. In some respects our proposals do not go as far as the demands of the Kisan Sabha but we think on the whole they are quite fair and reasonable and should be accepted by the Congress. I shall be able to give you any further information or elucidate our reasons for our proposals on any point that you may require. The Zamindars have not yet accepted these but it is possible they may. As I have pointed out in the accompanying note it will be difficult to give relief in respect of arrears and *bakhsit* lands and the legislation in all may be delayed for some time in the Upper Chamber. With consent of all parties legislation may be expedited. I will be obliged if you kindly indicate your views.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

134. To Vallabhbhai Patel

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
23-11-1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Many thanks for your kind letter. I am not at all well. After my return to Patna I had to take part in discussions regarding the tenancy legislation in this Province. I am sending a long note on the subject. For the time being it is not accepted but chances are that it may be accepted even now. If so, shall we accept the terms as there indicated or with some slight modifications here and there? Kindly consider it from the point of view of tenants, as it is possible Kisan Sabha may criticise it. I shall be obliged for an early reply. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was here in this connection for several days and these terms were settled with his consent.

The discussions involved much strain, with the result that I have had a somewhat severe relapse of asthma. I was to go to my village for rest for a few days but that has to be postponed for some days as the doctors do not like that I should be away in this acute state of asthma.

Pantji has not relieved me from the Cawnpore work. The inquiry is going on in my absence. Professor Rudra, one of the other members, is acting in my place. Gulzari Lal¹ is also not available. But I shall have to prepare and sign the report which means more work at a later stage.

Bapu's health has been causing much anxiety. I hope you will be able to settle the Ahmedabad strikes.

Yours affectionately,
Rajendra Prasad

¹Gulzari Lal Nanda, who became Home Minister at the Centre and acting Prime Minister twice after independence.

135. From Mahadev Desai

Wardha
24 Nov. 1937

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
PATNA

VERY SLOWLY PROGRESSING SOME MONTHS REST NECESSARY

MAHADEV

136. To J.B. Kripalani

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
25th November 1937

My dear Kripalaniji,

Two days ago I wrote a long letter to Jawaharlalji explaining the position regarding certain negotiations about the tenancy legislation that have been going on between Maulana Azad and myself on the one hand and representatives of the zamindars on the other. We were also consulting every now and then with representatives of the Kisan Sabha. Our conclusions do not go as far as the Kisan

Sabha would like us to go but we consider them reasonable. The matter has, however, not reached a conclusive stage. I have asked for Panditji's opinion but after posting the letter I saw in the papers that he had gone away to Muradabad and other places in connection with the by-elections in some Muslim constituencies of the Provincial Assembly. You will please remind him when he comes to write to me about it. It is necessary to know his views particularly because I find from a signed article of Swami Sahajanand published in the *Janta* that he has laid down five points as the minimum demands of the kisans. They are: (1) Full right of the kisans to fruits, flowers and timber of trees and to bamboos standing in their holdings; (2) Restoration to kisans of all *bakhast* lands without any payment; (3) Full remission of all arrears of rent; (4) Law relating to realisation of rent should be such as to prevent the passing out of land from the hands of the tenants; (5) *Salami* paid on transfer of their lands by kisans to be abolished entirely and the power given to some zamindars to realise arrears of rent by special procedure known as certificate procedure to be abolished altogether. Of these, the power of certificate is to be abolished. As regards the other points the demand is only half met. I am enclosing a copy of the note which I have sent to Pandit Jawaharlalji and you will gather from it the extent to which we can go by way of compromise with the zamindars. We are told that there will be legal difficulties in restoring *bakhast* lands and wiping out arrears by legislation which may be regarded as expropriatory. We have had two considerations prominently before us, viz. quick passage of the necessary legislation through the two chambers thus ensuring speedy relief, and secondly settling the question of *bakhast* and arrears also by consent. I think the note will make the position clear and will enable you and Panditji to form an opinion on the proposal. I shall be obliged for an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

137. To Biswanath Das, Premier, Government of Orissa .

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
26th Nov. 1937

My dear Biswanath Babu,

Mr. G.S. Venkateshwar and Mr. T.V.N. Chakravarty have seen me in connection with some land legislation which you have introduced into your Assembly. I am too ill to go into the merits of the question and have not been able even to read a memorandum which they have given to me. They tell me that similar question arises in the Madras Presidency also and they desire that the consideration of this Bill might wait till that Presidency is also ready with its report and Bill on the subject. They hope that in the meantime a discussion

between the Ministry and representative zamindars might take place to see if an agreed settlement can be formed. On account of my own ill health I had requested Maulana Azad to look into the matter but he is unable to do so and has asked me to suggest to you to postpone the matter for some time. It is somewhat awkward for any one of us outside your Asscmbly to suggest to you any particular step in an important and urgent matter like this but seeing that similar questions are engaging the attention of the Madras Ministry you may as well consider the desirability of awaiting the decision of the Madras Ministry and, if possible, to find an agreed solution in the mcantime. I hope you will give the matter your consideration and will not mistake the spirit in which the suggestion is made.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

138. *From Mahadev Desai*

Wardha
27 Nov. 1937

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
SADAQUAT ASHRAM
PATNA

BAPU SLOWLY PROGRESSING IS DEFINITELY AGAINST YOUR JOINING
ALUMINIUM DIRECTORATE

MAHADEV

139. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
28th Nov. 1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received your letter dated 21st November '37 today. I sent you a note two or three days ago to your Ahmedabad address regarding the talk Maulana Azad and I had with the representatives of the zamindars here. I have sent a copy to Pandit Jawaharlalji and Kripalani and asked for their opinion. I find in the *Janta*, an organ of the Socialists and the Kisan Sabha of the Province, a signed article by Swamiji (Sahajanand). He lays down five minimum demands of kisans, viz., (1) their full rights to fruits, flowers and timber of trees and bamboos standing in their holdings, (2) restoration of all *bakhsat* lands to kisans without payment, (3) complete remission of all arrears of rent, (4) law relating to realisation of rent to be so framed as to make it impossible for land to pass out of

the hands of tenants for arrears of rent, (5) *salami* on transfer of holding to be abolished altogether and the right enjoyed by new zamindars to realise arrears of rent by special procedure, known as certificate procedure, to be abolished altogether. You will gather from the note in which all these points are explained that our proposals meet the kisans' demands only half way on all these points except in the matter of certificate procedure which has to be abolished. You will gather to what extent it is possible to go with the consent of the zamindars. In these negotiations we have had two things prominently before us, viz. quick passage of legislation in the two chambers and consequent speedy relief; secondly, some solution of the problem of *bakhist* and arrears by consent. We are told that there may be some legal difficulties which may be regarded as expropriatory. In our scheme there is a half-way solution of these two also by consent. I shall be obliged if you kindly consider the matter and let me know your opinion.

Kripalaniji has not come to me and I have not received any report from Kishorelalbhai either. I know only what has appeared in the papers about the decision to organise labour. I am expecting a full report from Kishorelalbhai in due course.

I have asked friends in the districts to be vigilant and to organise as suggested by you. My health is very poor as I wrote to you in my last letter. I may be going to Ziradei in a day or two. I hope rest will be helpful. I am very anxious about Bapu's health. Yesterday someone brought an alarming news which we were told was heard on the Radio the night before. It made me very anxious and I immediately wired to Mahadev for news. His reply though somewhat better than what had been reported to me is not altogether reassuring. He only says very slowly progressing, some months' rest necessary. I hope God will spare him for us and for the world at large as there is much which still remain to be done by him.

I hope you are well and have succeeded in settling the Ahmedabad trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

140. To Govind Ballabh Pant

P.O. Ziradei
Saran Dt.
2nd December 1937

My dear Pantji,

I have received your telegram here and have wired to you as follows:

"SORRY TOO WEAK UNDERTAKE JOURNEY"

I am really sorry that I am unable to come. After my return from Calcutta I was detained at Patna by my doctors for observation and treatment. While I was at Calcutta some of the zamindars approached me to bring about a settlement of the agrarian problem and I requested Maulana Azad to come to Patna for the purpose. So during my stay there Maulana and I had conversations with the zamindars. I had hoped that both treatment and conversation might go together. But the strain proved too much and my departure for this place had to be put off more than once by the doctors just to enable me to get over acute fits. I arrived here on the 27th evening and although I am gradually getting better, it is yet too early to say when I can begin my normal activities. November and December are usually the worst months for me and I have, therefore, to be extra careful. This year I have had an additional trouble. It has been found that continued asthmatic trouble has caused weakness of the heart. I had one experience of it just on the eve of the Sugarcane Conference at Lucknow which I could not attend. A second trouble came on my way from Wardha to Calcutta at Jamshedpur which prevented me from attending the meeting of the All India Congress Committee. The doctors have, therefore, advised rest for which I have come here. I am ashamed that having undertaken the responsibility of the Cawnpore Enquiry and Parliamentary Committee I am unable to discharge my duties. But unfortunately I am helpless. I hope, however, I shall recover soon and will then begin work. In the meantime I can only ask for indulgence of friends.

I do not know the nature of business for which you want me on the 5th. If there be anything on which you think I can be consulted through a messenger you will please send one with detailed instructions. I am at my village which is about two miles from Bhantapokhar station on the main line of the R & N W Rly. which is three or four stations below Bhatni. Two of the Express trains, viz., 1 Up and 2 Down do not stop at Bhantapokhar. But anyone coming by these trains may get down at Siwan, the next station, where conveyance is always available. The telegraph office is also Siwan but it is seven or eight miles away and so telegrams are delayed unless received by the Siwan Telegraph office before 12 noon in which case they reach me by 4 o'clock by post.

I have received a letter from Maulana Azad that he too has not been keeping well and as the Id falls about the 5th of December he is not likely to undertake a journey before the Ramzan is over. In case the meeting for which you have called me is postponed please inform me so that if by the time it takes place I am in a position to come I may do so.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely
Rajendra Prasad

141. To Sri Krishna Sinha

P.O. Ziradei (Dt. Saran)
2nd December 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

I had written to Maulana Azad explaining the course of our conversation with the zamindars. I had also sent the report about the agrarian position and our conversation with the zamindars which I had given you, Anugrah Babu and Baldev Babu, to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Maulana met Jawaharlalji in Calcutta on his way to Assam and had conversation with him about this matter. Panditji told him that he had received my note but that as he was not familiar with the tenancy laws in my Province and has not had enough time to study the question he felt he could not give any definite opinion and that he had left the letter with Kripalaniji to reply. Maulana does not anticipate that if those terms are accepted there will be any difficulty from his side. Kripalaniji has written me to say that Panditji has told him that if Maulana and I are satisfied he would have nothing to say. So the position is that if the terms that we had fixed are accepted by the zamindars we may go forward and have the legislation with their consent. I anticipate that Swami Sahajanand may raise objections but on the whole I hope we shall be able to satisfy the Provincial Congress Committee and the bulk of the people. In case, however, the zamindars are not agreeable then we must proceed with our programme. Maulana thinks that in that case the seven years clause should be retained as we were persuaded to give it up only to purchase the consent of the zamindars. We should also do away with *salami* altogether. As regards *bakhast* we shall have to adopt the procedure we had contemplated, viz., enquiry by three Panches—one zamindar, one kisan and one Government representative, and decide according to the result of the enquiry on the spot in favour of one party or the other on the question of possession. The recent legislation in Bengal regarding *salami* places us in an awkward position and that we should abolish *salami* and make the payment of 4% of consideration money as a fee for subdivision of the holding as suggested by Baldev Babu.

2. I have received a long circular letter from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in which he depicts the situation in the country specially in the Congress Provinces as he sees it. He refers to the awakening among kisans, industrial labourers and students and points out that the Congress ministries have to deal with the situation tactfully. The use of repressive laws and coercive methods he naturally dislikes and opines that this can be resorted to only in very exceptional cases. Batliwala's case, irrespective of its merits, has been unfortunate as it has failed to serve the purpose it might have been intended to serve. He apprehends that similar use of coercive methods may have similar results elsewhere also and may furnish excuse to the British Government for the use of repressive methods whenever occasion arises in the future. On the agrarian and labour question he thinks that the Ministry must act quickly if a serious crisis has to be averted. He has

written this circular letter to members of the Working Committee. I am not troubling you with the letter but I have indicated to you the trend of his views so that you might keep them in view in dealing with the problems confronting you.

3. You might know that after the Calcutta meeting of the All India Congress Committee some friends felt strongly that if the principle and the programme for which Gandhiji stands and for which we have been working all these years are not to be allowed to be undermined by insidious propaganda and sometimes open attack, those who hold to them should organise themselves. They asked me to consider the question and later on a meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh was held in Wardha which as you know I could not attend on account of ill health. As a result of discussions there Shri Jairamdas Daulatram has written a long letter to me. The suggestion is that we should not sit over the matter any more. But all those who accept those principles should organise themselves and should also see to it that the Congress organisation, as such, does not pass out of their hands. This is also necessary if the great experiment of office acceptance, which is also another of Mahatmaji's experiment, has to succeed. I am feeling that in our Province the situation can be managed if we all just pay a little attention to it. I know that in some districts even those who accept Gandhiji's programme quarrel amongst themselves on personal grounds. The best illustration of the point is the district of Saran. We must see to it that all the personal bickerings and personal quarrels should be brought to an end in face of the danger to the programme which we all accept. I think the district of Muzaffarpur can be managed and so also Darbhanga. I have no doubt about Champaran and I am hoping to settle Saran. Bhagalpur is a district of personal differences and not of differences in programme except with a small group. In Monghyr, I think, the whole thing can be managed easily and so also in Purnea. In Santhal Pargana I do not anticipate any trouble. Chhotanagpur as a whole may be sound but there is just a risk of things going wrong if Babu Ramnarayan Sinha takes a line of his own which is not unlikely. The two districts where the programme may encounter greater opposition are Gaya and Patna and, to some extent, Shahabad also is in the same category. I want you to exert your influence in Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Gaya, Patna and Shahabad so that things may go on as well as we want them to. I do not want any kind of unfair dealing or unfair advantage to be taken by those in office of the Congress Committee against their opponents wherever the former happens to hold views of the orthodox Congress programme. But it is necessary that warning should be given to all our friends that they should act in a concerted way at the next elections of the Congress which are going to take place within the next three weeks. Wherever any differences exist they should be composed so that if at all necessary there may be a clear and clean contest between the orthodox programmewallas on the one side, and socialists on the other. There would be no occasion given to the latter to take advantage of any differences amongst the former. I am writing this at great length to you knowing the pressure on your time but my excuse is that the matter is urgent and unless we all work in a concerted manner and let the Congress organisation take a correct attitude we

may have to face great difficulties in future. You know none of us is anxious to keep the Congress organisation in our hands but we feel that we shall be doing a great disservice to the cause we all hold dear and to the country at large if we allow the principles and the programme for which all of us have worked to be distorted or displaced by others which we know are bound to injure the best interests of the country. In this connection I may tell you that the W.C. of the Champaran District Congress Committee has passed some sort of a resolution asking Swami Sahajanand to cancel his tour in that district as his speeches are likely to create what they call *Budhibhed*. I am not in possession of the exact term of the resolution but I have received vehement complaints from the Swami on the ground of the resolution being an encroachment on civil liberty and violation of the Congress resolution sanctioning Kisan unions. He has also complained to the President of the Congress. I have asked for details and explanation from the District Congress Committee. This is likely to become a major issue not only in the Province but in the country. I should be obliged if you could give me reports of his speeches when I return to Patna for my private use so that I could find out from them how far the action of the Champaran Congress Committee is justified.

4. I hope the question of the release of prisoners is receiving your attention.

I wrote to you forwarding Pandit Jawaharlalji's and Sarat Babu's letters regarding some prisoners and detenus. I have heard nothing in reply. I trust the matter is not lost in the files.

Please excuse the length of the letter and take the action suggested particularly in regard to Congress organisation.

I am sending a copy of the first para of the letter to Baldev Babu and copy of the whole of the letter to Anugrah Babu for their information.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

142. To Baldev Sahay, Advocate General, Patna

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
2nd December 1937

My dear Baldev Babu,

Please find enclosed herewith copy of an extract from a letter I have addressed to Sri Babu. I am not writing to you separately to avoid duplication.

There is another matter about which it is necessary to write to you as you mentioned it to me. You told me something about some action of the Purnea Congress Committee against Durga Babu and some others. As you know I did not go into the matter and I am not acquainted with all the facts. There is one

thing, however, which I like you and Birji Babu to consider and settle. Durga Babu's politics has been an uncertain thing. He was with us entirely in the year 1921. Subsequently like many others he joined the Bar but unlike some people amongst whom you are one he did not keep himself on the right side with the Congress. During the struggle I am told he went to the length of joining Aman Sabha and doing things which others who were never with the Congress ever did. During the Assembly election he not only himself stood against the Congress but set up a Harijan candidate against Shri Jaglal Choudhury and worked wholeheartedly for him. His propaganda also was not altogether of an unobjectionable character. After the election he thought of coming in the Congress but in this also he does not appear to have adopted a course which can be called quite straight. His object has been to capture the Congress organisation and for that purpose he tried to enrol members. I do not object to anyone entering the Congress or enrolling members but I do not like the idea of anyone trying to capture it to serve his own personal end. I am not sure that even now he has got no personal ambition in the matter. I think, on the other hand, having failed in a straight fight against the Congress organisation he wants to get the organisation in his control and for this purpose he has been trying to collect around himself all those who are dissatisfied with the present men in power in the organisation there. Amongst those whom he is collecting around himself are so-called Socialists, Kisan Sabhaites and others who do not see eye to eye with the executive there or with the majority in the Congress there. I do not think this is the right approach and while it may be that a particular resolution which has been passed by the Committee is not technically correct there can hardly be any doubt that if what I have stated above is correct his plans should not be encouraged. I do not mean to say that any unfair means should be adopted to resist him but if he seeks your or my help he should act in such a way as to make us feel assured that his attitude is correct and not actuated by any selfish motive. It has been necessary to write to you like this as in many districts I find all discontented people are gathering together in opposition to the policy and programme which we have been following under Gandhiji's guidance. I hope you will have a private chat with him and assure yourself in such a way as to be able to assure me about the future so that we may know how far his joining the Congress is genuine and not for throwing it into pieces.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

143. To Dr. Syed Mahmood, Minister of Education, Bihar

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
3rd December 1937

My dear Doctor Mahmood,

Lakshmi Babu informs me that a scheme for Khaddar has already been sent to you. One copy of it has been given to Shri Jagjivan Ram, your Parliamentary Secretary. I hope you will consider the scheme as also the scheme of the All India Village Industries Association. In the Village Industries Scheme there are several things apart from Gur from palm juice and so it should not be rejected wholesale without being duly considered in all its aspects. Both village industries and Khadi have been important items in the Congress programme for years and we have been trying to do what was possible without Government aid and sometimes in spite of Government opposition so long. Now we may not pursue the same policy of indifference or opposition when we have got Congress Ministries. I know these schemes do not appeal to the officers whether they be technical men or members of the Civil Service. Their views have been known to us for many years and yet we have accepted these items in the Congress programme because we have felt that they alone can really help our people. We cannot forsake our past because we happen to be now in office. I, therefore, hope you will give due consideration to these matters. I wish I could have discussion with you and I have no doubt in my mind that I would have been able to convince you that we shall be doing the right thing in giving the fullest possible encouragement to them.

I think the Sugarcane Control Bill is going to be introduced during the current session of the Assembly. I have had no opportunity of looking into the Bill. I shall be obliged if you could kindly send me a copy. There is one thing about which I have never felt quite on sure ground. I do not know how far the Governments of Bihar and the United Provinces will succeed in controlling the price of sugar. I believe that neither of the two Governments was desirous of having such a control but they both wanted to control the price of sugarcane and it was at the request of the millowners themselves that the control of price of sugar was also included in the scheme. I do not know in what way this is to be achieved. But I think the method suggested was to license sugar factories and the condition of the licence should be that the mill should join the Syndicate which has been established for controlling the sale and price of sugar. If I am correct in my opinion that the millowners wanted this control to be exercised by the Govt. through the Syndicate by means of licence, then I should think the provision in the Bill for licensing should be in the form of an enabling section empowering the Government to license or not to license as it chose and it should not exercise this power of licensing unless a majority of the mills wanted the Government to exercise it. It should be in this elastic form so that the government may not be always bound to use this power. If after experience it is found that licensing is essential then the government will, of course, exercise the power. If on the other

hand it is considered inadvisable to exercise it, it may refrain from doing so. I put this suggestion for your consideration at the request of some millowners who are doubtful about the policy and who would, therefore, like the Government to proceed cautiously in the matter.

I hope your health is better. It requires looking after and you have to pay some attention to it if there is not to be a breakdown. I am improving but need some more rest here.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

144. To Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Minister of Finance, Bihar

P.O. Ziradei (Dt. Saran)
4th December 1937

My dear Anugrah Babu,

I am herewith sending you a letter I have received from Mr. Gandhi of the Rohtas Industries Limited. He is a clever writer and his publications contain a great deal of information on the subjects they deal with. I do not know who are going to be members of the Labour Committee you are going to appoint. He can be a suitable representative on the employers' side without being an employer, strictly speaking. I think the Bihar Committee has to deal with labour of different classes, e.g. factory labour as at Jamshedpur and Jamalpur, mine labour as in the coalfields and temporary factory as in the sugar mills. You cannot have representatives of employers of all these classes, nor representatives of labour from all these classes; so it would be best to have men more or less of a general sort who look upon the question not from a viewpoint of any particular industry but generally. From that point of view Mr. Gandhi may be a suitable person. But I do not want you to be influenced unduly by this suggestion of mine. Please consider this name along with others that you may have with you.

I find in the *Searchlight* that you have already announced at Dehri that I am to be on the Committee. I feel really ashamed that I am not able to do justice to the Cawnpore Committee. It does not look at all fair that I should take further responsibilities without having discharged those already taken. Then again Dr. Mahmood was thinking of putting me on the Education Committee. I do not know how I shall be able to do justice to all these Committees. I would, therefore, request you to consider the matter in consultation with Dr. Mahmood and let me finish the Cawnpore work, if I can do so at all, before putting on me any further responsibility.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

145. From C.F. Andrews

Santiniketan
December 4, 1937

My dear Rajen,

Today I came across an extract in the newspaper which you had yourself signed, pleading for help in London towards the building of a Hindu Mandir and its accompaniments, among which I shall hope very much a Dharamsala should be attached. I cannot tell you how much this is needed and how important it will be for the Hindus who live in London in such great numbers. Again and again I have had to help those who were quite literally starving owing to no fault of their own and these have not been those who have wasted their money or lived a bad life but just the opposite. I am communicating with the Press strongly supporting it.

I was so sorry to hear how ill you had been again and I do hope so much that you are better. I found that I suffered a partial relapse as soon as I got down to the plains and I have still to be very careful indeed.

With much love,

C.F. Andrews

146. From Vallabhbhai Patel

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Congress House
Bombay-4
4th December 1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter. I am sorry that you are not keeping fit, but now you must take complete rest for at least a month. I think the general proposals that you have sent to me are quite good and if you can get through the Bill by consent it would be a great gain. It is no use trying to improve it, if it has to be forced down the throats of unwilling landlords. We shall have to resist the excessive demands of the tenants who have been worked up and expect too much from Congress ministers. The reports of Kisan demonstrations in your Province are disquieting.

I have returned from Ahmedabad on the 1st after settling a critical situation that had arisen there. Cawnpore affairs continue to give trouble. Pantji has wired to us three to come there soon. I am reaching Lucknow on the 7th, Maulana comes on the 8th, but I do not think you will be able to come.

Hope you are doing well.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

147. To Sri Krishna Sinha

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
5th December 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

I regret I have to trouble you about two matters which I have come to know today. I am enclosing a Hindi translation of a letter I have received from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. There are two things in it. The first relates to local bodies. He wants that reservation of seats with joint electorates to Muslims should be provided by legislation. The Muslim League Party is making much capital out of this question and he thinks that if these things are adopted without there being any demand on the part of Musalmans it will have a great effect in reassuring Musalmans and cut the earth from under the feet of the League propaganda. He does not feel there is any harm, in principle, in conceding reservation of seats and maintaining joint electorates. The second thing is about the Tenancy legislation. I do not know what report the Select Committee has submitted. I only read in papers that the report of the Select Committee was presented to the Assembly. In case there is no agreement with the Zamindars then the points on which concession was made will have to be reconsidered. He mentions among these the seven years clause, abolition of *salami*, right to trees, and so forth. I had written to you at length and had sent to you his previous letter on this point. It seems that in the absence of the agreement we have to go forward with our scheme irrespective of the conversation we had.

The second thing about which I have to trouble you is the Bodh Gaya temple. I gave you the correspondence that had passed and you told me that you would send for the Mahanth and would have a talk with him. I do not know if anything has happened since then. Today I have received a letter from a deputation which has already arrived in Calcutta and which will probably wait on you. They have written to me to fix a time to meet me on any date between the 16th and 19th of December. The matter is now becoming urgent and may not brook any further delay. When they come to meet us we shall have to tell them something definite and also what steps, if any, we have taken in the matter. Therefore, I would request you to do something without delay and find out the Mahanth's attitude so that we may be in a position to tell them something positive. Of course the deputation does not say anything in the letter to me about the threatened Satyagraha. But I should not be surprised if its failure ultimately develops into a Satyagraha. So apart from the justice of their case, which is clear, we have to take this aspect of the question also into consideration.

I do not wish to complain but I have found that letters are not always either attended or acknowledged. I hope this will not be the fate of this letter as I have to write something definite to Maulana and the deputationists.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Copy forwarded to Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Finance Minister, for information.

148. To Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Minister of Finance, Bihar

P.O. Ziradei
Distt. Saran
6th December 1937

My dear Anugrah Babu,

I have received a letter from M. Abul Kalam Azad in which he refers to elections of Commissioners of Daudnagar Municipality. I understand the Muslim population there is about 25% but out of 12 members nominated by the Congress only 1 is Muslim. He has succeeded. But there seems to be some feeling that more Muslims should have been nominated by the Congress. This can be mitigated by nomination which the Government has to make. There are three members to be nominated. You might give 2 of these nominations to Muslims, one to Depressed Class. I am enclosing the letter that I have received.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosure not included.

149. To Ramdayalu Sinha¹

P.O. Ziradei
Distt. Saran
7th December 1937

My dear Ramdayalu Babu,

Mathura Babu has sent me scrappy notes of conversation he had with you. I am anxious about your health. It seems you have had fever and have not been sparing yourself even when you had temperature. I hope by the time this letter reaches you you will be better.

I am fully conscious of the complicated situation that is fast developing in the Province. It requires careful handling and concerted action on the part of all who hold to the general programme and the fundamental tenets of Mahatmaji! There is insidious and open propaganda attacking its fundamentals and if all that we have been trying to do and achieve has not to be thrown away something has to be done by us all. That is necessary not because of any differences between individuals but because Gandhiji's programme is the only programme which can lead us to success. Any other programme will lead us to ruin and disaster. I have, therefore, been anxious how best to meet the situation. You are aware that I have

never taken any interest in Congress elections all these years. But it seems this policy of indifference has to be abandoned and we must organise our forces when others have been working in an organised way and on party lines. Two things are necessary in this connection. The first is intensive propaganda explaining our programme and pointing out the defects of other programmes, without in any way involving personalities. The second thing which is necessary is an organised attempt to participate in the Congress elections so as to ensure the return of the largest number of men of our way of thinking as delegates and as members of the A.I.C.C. without, of course, in any way adopting any tactics which involve unfair means. I have, therefore, been writing to friends to take up both these works. I am anxious about Muzaffarpur district. It seems people who agree in principle differ on other grounds and the result is confusion. I do not believe that there is any difference in principle between Mahesh Babu, Deep Babu and Thakur Ramnandan Singh as there is between all these gentlemen on the one side and the Socialists and the Kisan Sabhaites on the other. Still for some reason or other they are unable to act together and other friends take advantage of their differences and manage to get a larger share in the representation as delegates and as members of the A.I.C.C. than their number and influence would entitle them to. I have written to Sri Babu to help in bringing about coalescence of all those who agree with us so that we might have a clean-cut division of parties not only in Muzaffarpur alone but also in other districts. In Saran, there has been no difference about principle or programme but workers have been divided. I am trying to bring about a complete fusion of all divided parties and I am hoping that there will remain no difference in this district which may hamper concerted action in the matter. There is no fear of having division in Champaran. In Darbhanga, Satyanarain Babu and others are valiantly fighting to assert their own position against determined efforts of others, and from reports it appears that their efforts are bearing fruit. There is some little trouble in Monghyr. But workers like Shri Nandkumar Singh are alive to the situation and I have also written to them to be active. In Chhotanagpur there should not be much difficulty unless the "Jangli Raja" chooses to create it. I have written to Purnea and Santhal Pargana where I trust things will be set right. Bhagalpur is the only district about which I have not been able to take any steps so far. But there also the division is not only on these lines but there is just a chance of disappointed people forming a separate group. My object in writing to you even while you are in weak health is just to intimate to you what I have been doing and to request you to do what you can to help in the matter. Gaya and Patna are two of the worst districts but I am not altogether hopeless. If you all take bold and concerted action they also may be managed. Shahabad should not be a very difficult district. I would request you to send for Sri Babu and Anugrah Babu if you are not going to meet them otherwise and have a plain talk with them on all the points mentioned by you to Mathura Babu. I have written to them at length but it is not possible to explain everything in a letter to the extent you can in conversation. It is time we all acted with expedition and determination.

particularly to interest yourself in Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga districts.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

¹ Ramdayalu Sinha—Speaker in the first Congress Ministry in Bihar in 1937; participated in the Champaran movement. He was a member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council in the thirties.

150. *From Biswaiath Das, Premier, Orissa*

Cuttack
7-12-1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Received your letter with thanks. I am sorry I could not reply you earlier as I am going on with the Bill to amend the Estates Land Act, about which representation was made to you and your letter followed. These are the facts of this case. Taking advantage of non-cooperation and also certain summary powers vested in Zamindars, they have enhanced rents to a pitch which no tenant could pay. The result is rents have been assessed very high; as high as Rs. 12, 15, 16, and 18 per acre. It was one of our election pledges that we will give them relief. The present proposal is that instead of leaving the fixation of assessment to the sweet mercy of the executive officers, the notion of fair and equitable rent on the holding of the tenant is fixed on the above basis. This fixation follows the well-defined principles of assessment and classification of land adopted for the *khasmahal* areas in Madras and 12½ per cent more, but on receipt of your letter I withdrew those amendments. I had been also negotiating with the Zamindars. Unfortunately, I do not see an attitude for proper adjustment.

I have to tell you now that I am being worried very much by a few members of the party who have been openly preaching against the party throwing aside all discipline. I will be glad if you could come over here once during the Assembly session which starts on the 24th January or in the middle of it. This is also necessary because you will see how the Assembly in Orissa is working and also benefit us with your advice. I am starting for Delhi and from there to Lahore to attend the meetings of Ministers on official requisition.

How is your health? I hope you are better. May God give you health so that you devote yourself fully and well to the service of the country. I would have seen you if I had attended the Senate meeting at Patna. Unfortunately, however, previous engagements stood in my way. Hope this finds you hale and hearty.

Yours sincerely,
B.N. Das

151. To Sir M. Visveswaraya, Bangalore, and Ghanshyamdas Birla, Calcutta

Sadaquat Ashram
Dighaghat, Patna
8th December 1937

Dear

The Government of Bihar have under contemplation the appointment of a suitable person to help them in devising schemes of reconstruction of the Province and its development. They are anxious to have a really capable person who would be able to study the peculiar conditions and resources of the Province and suggest practical schemes of development. They are prepared to pay a suitable salary and would not expect the person selected to conform to the Congress resolution regarding salaries. The Prime Minister has asked me to enquire if you could kindly suggest any person who could take up this onerous work. Hoping to be excused for the trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

152. From Vallabhbhai Patel

Bombay
12-12-1937

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I returned here yesterday morning. I met Bapu, told him about Lucknow visit. He was sorry to hear all that had happened. He felt that they have allowed themselves to be entangled in a wrong issue. I got a message from Jivat on the phone. He says that he met J. at Benaras and travelled with him to Lucknow. As expected he does agree with our views. He feels that there is no reason why they should resign. Probably he may feel that they have done well.

Bapu is not at all [happy]. He feels strongly that his advice at Calcutta still holds good with greater force. Anyway we may have a fixed struggle at Haripura. Nariman has joined hands with the Communists at Bombay, though not yet openly. The States people will continue and the Socialists are mobilising. Please see that in the selection of delegates, eliminate all the anti-Gandhi elements. We must no more tolerate the forces of disorder in the name of united front. They have taken undue advantage of our toleration, but the time has come for a definite [stand]. You must get through the tenancy legislation. The compromise is good. Let it not be lost.

You must get well soon.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

153. From Sir M. Visveswaraya

46 F, Warden Road

Bombay

15th December 1937

My dear Mr. Rajendra Prasad,

Your letter of the 8th instant which was addressed to Bangalore reached me yesterday in Bombay where I am staying at present.

It is difficult to find a really capable Indian, who is not already employed, for devising schemes of reconstruction for Bihar. It will be a many-sided task. It would probably be well to appoint for the purpose a small committee composed of two or three persons from the public services and professions in your own Province, persons who have travelled abroad, who have an up-to-date outlook on national life and who are keen on development work. The committee may be presided over by you or by a minister who has the necessary outlook.

It would be a good thing to train local men who have a stake in the Province.

A practitioner of today is the expert of tomorrow. The development work may, at first view, appear complicated, but capable officials will soon get into the stride once they begin to study the problems and the organisations needed.

A beginning may be made with a Development Committee working under your Development Department. The actual executive work in education, industries, public works, etc., will be attended to by the Departments concerned. Special staff may be employed only for work to which the regular Government Departments are not accustomed.

When I was in Patna in March last, I came across two or three young officers who I thought were quite smart and capable of organising and developing reconstruction operations.

The details of the executive work to be done and the manner of its association with the normal work of other departments will have to be considered and suitably adjusted.

If the Bihar Government has the will to push on, a beginning may be made with District Development work which aims at rural reconstruction, relief of unemployment and securing for the poor a proper minimum subsistence standard.

If your Government can provide the necessary funds and staff there should be no difficulty in formulating schemes for practical action with the aid of a Committee such as I have suggested.

I shall be glad to hear what you think of the foregoing suggestions.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. Visveswaraya

Enclosure:

*Extract from A. V. Thakkar's letter dated Delhi the 14th December 1937
to Ghanshyamdas Birla*

"I had been on a short visit to Patna and Lucknow to interview the Minister. I found that nobody seriously thinks of doing Harijan uplift work. They are all afraid of Muslim opposition who want the Muslim Backward classes to receive the same concessions as the Hindu Harijans. However, I will talk to you when I come for the Executive Committee meeting."

156. *From C.F. Andrews¹*

Santiniketan
December 17, 1937

My dear Rajen,

I dread to burden you with anything else in your illness: but this letter has come from Miss M. Shephard² who is struggling to get protection from the law for innocent women in India. I had taken this up and then I thought of you.

With much love from

Charlie

Enclosure:

New Delhi
30.11.1937

Dear Charlie Andrews,

I was so sorry to learn that you had been in Delhi at the Y.W.C.A. and yet that we had not met. I hope you are better.

Could you ask the Congress people to try to make a real stand about child marriage (B. Das' amendment)—& also about the vice areas? I get so ashamed that we can do *little* to educate India up to the single standard, and yet when one knows the obstacles to a high standard, as I do, it is not surprising. One of the worst sides of it all is the way in which the women alone are bullied. Here in Delhi we are just beginning to agitate again for a survey of the situation here—where for four years I have been trying to get the Council to remove the brothel-keepers from Chawri Bazar. I feel these Congressmen cannot realize how many rich & "respected" Indian merchants are themselves engaged in this terrible traffic, and there are fairs, as at Sonepur in Bihar, where the women are sent in by rajahs and zamindars, and they are medically examined, made to live in the Nakhas area of the fair and then when the fair is over, they go back (usually infected) to their villages. The D.P. Health told me that those selected for the fair as free from

disease were young village girls, and that they could ask as much as Rs. 100 per man "which is a profitable business for the zamindar who owns her". This Indian D.P.H. saw nothing wrong at all about his methods. When I asked what his responsibility was for the girls in their plight when the fair was over, he merely shrugged his shoulders and said he did not know what they did after leaving Sonepur. Prophylactic packets are sold at 2 pice each and 5 ablution stations are provided for men with Boy Scouts to tell them where to go—and lecturers to tell them how to avoid V.D.! It all seems to me quite mad! Surely Gandhi can use his influence if, as he said to me once, the future of Indian nationhood depends upon the virility of her men and women of today: a virility not only of spirit but of mind and body too.

Please help. This Cinderella of all social services needs to be rescued from the ashes of despair by which she so patiently sits—and then perhaps the world may see that Purity is her name and that with the help of her spirit God can be seen more clearly, working out His will in the affairs of men and women of today.

Yours sincerely,
M. Shephard

¹C.F. Andrews—a Church of England missionary who first met Gandhi in South Africa where they worked together for Indians' civil rights campaign. Later they became lifelong friends.

²Miss Meliscent Shephard—Central Organiser in India for the Association for Moral and Social Hygiene.

157. To Sri Krishna Sinha

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
17th December 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

The Buddhist deputation is coming on the 18th to meet me here at Ziradei. I will of course send them on to you also. I have not heard anything about the talk with the Mahanth that you were to have. If there has been any talk please send a wire early in the morning so that I may get it here by noon and talk to the deputation in light of it. If there has been no talk of it I shall of course talk to them in general way and refer them to you. You will have to be ready to meet them some time on the 19th when they will expect to hear something from you. As I told you I have received a letter from the Bodh Gaya Defence League of Ceylon on whose behalf perhaps this deputation is coming. They say that much precious time is already wasted by postponing the campaign of Satyagraha and it is likely that if the deputation is not satisfied with our reply they may start their campaign which will embarrass us all. I have, therefore, been anxious to get some reply from the Mahanth so that I might give them a definite reply.

Today I have posted a statement in Hindi to the office of the Provincial

Congress Committee explaining the settlement between us and the Zamindars on the tenancy question. I have asked the office to get it checked with reference to the original agreement by Badri Babu and get it printed in large numbers and distributed to Congress workers. Kindly ask Badri Babu to expedite the matter so that it may be published within the next two days. It may be published also in Hindi papers. An English rendering should also be sent to the English papers. I thought the terms would be ready for signature on Wednesday and waited for a typed copy the whole day. At about 9 o'clock in the night Anugrah Babu, Chandreshwar Babu and Shyamnandan Babu came to me but without the thing in its final form, not to speak of its being fair typed. I came away yesterday. I do not know in what stage it is. I think the statement in Hindi should be published along with the terms. You must have received a rather stiff letter from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru about Mr. Brett's circular. I think you have to take a definite stand in the matter. It is really very wrong on the part of Mr. Brett to have issued a circular letter thus. In fact no circular should be issued without the Ministry's approval, if it is of any importance at all.

Please send me a copy of the agreement.

Rajendra Prasad

158. To Sri Krishna Sinha

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
20th December 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

Please find enclosed herewith copy of a letter I have received from Shri Ghanshyamdas Birla, President, Harijan Sevak Sangh, with copy of a note of Shri Thakkar Bappa, the Secretary of the Sangh. I have found that three or four things about which Gandhiji has been keen have not been receiving much, if any, attention at the hands of the Ministry, e.g. (1) Nothing has been done so far, although you have been in office for nearly five months, to give encouragement to Khaddar; (2) Nothing has been done about village industries; (3) Nothing has been done to introduce prohibition; (4) Very little, if anything at all, has been done to help Harijans and aborigines. I think all these items are important and in the view of Gandhiji more important than anything else that we may attempt to do. I have been trying to interest Dr. Mahmood in the Khaddar and the Village Industries Scheme but with no success so far. I have been keen about prohibition but it seems no progress is possible. On the one hand Shri Jaglal Choudhury has not got any cut-and-dried scheme ready, on the other there is the bogey of finance coming in the way. I do not know whom to approach or interest in regard to the Harijans and the aborigines. I would request you to take personal interest

in these matters and, if necessary, to place this letter of mine before your colleagues for such action as they may be inclined to take:

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Copy forwarded to Hon'ble Shri Anugrah Narain Sinha, Hon'ble Dr. Syed Mahmood and Hon'ble Jaglal Choudhury.

Enclosure not included.

159. *To Vallabhbhai Patel*

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
21st December 1937

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received your two letters. I read also in the papers that the Working Committee is going to meet in Bombay on the 2nd January. I am afraid it is going to put a heavy strain on Bapu. Why was Bombay selected? We could have spared Bapu and taken responsibility on ourselves. However, we must give him as little trouble as possible.

The agreement of the landlords had materialised and the Bill, as agreed, has been passed in the Assembly and is going to be taken up in the Council today. We are hoping that it will have an easy passage and will become law before Christmas. The other Bill dealing with the other matters will be taken up during the next session. Other legislation will also be facilitated.

Three of our District Congress Committees had passed resolutions against Kisan workers—notably Swami Sahajanand—in different forms and the matter came up before the Working Committee of the Province. Swami did not attend. All other members were present. After prolonged discussions we passed the resolution which you must have seen in the Press. There is much anger and resentment among Kisan Sabha workers and probably the thing will come up before the W.C. The atmosphere in the Province is at present disturbed and we have to deal with it cautiously and act firmly. There is no difficulty in the Province as a whole. There are only three or four districts where there is some trouble. One district, Gaya, is entirely in the hands of Kisan Sabha people—Patna comes next in order, and then come Monghyr and Muzaffarpur. The last two will not give any trouble, but the first two are sure to do so. However, we shall see how they can be managed best.

I think the larger question of the situation at large will engage the attention of the Working Committee. I shall talk about it when we meet. But I may indicate one or two points for your consideration in the meantime. Supposing we get out of the Working Committee; shall we not be leaving the ministries at the mercy of

an unsympathetic W.C.? What shall we do in the Provinces? In most of them there is no alternative W.C. possible. The bulk of the Congress workers and the people at large would like the present policy, which is inspired by Bapu, to continue. How can we retire? If we continue to be in charge of the Provinces and get out of the All India Working Committee there is bound to be constant friction. I do not know exactly how things are intended or expected to shape. As regards Pandit Jawaharlal, personally I have felt that since the advent of the ministry of the Congress he has veered more to our point of view. He has a theoretical background which sometimes leads him into positions which are embarrassing and which are full of contradictions. But unless something that happened in Calcutta behind the scene has been such as to create an altogether new situation, it should not be impossible to tide over the present difficulties. That Bapu thinks otherwise is undoubtedly a most important factor to be considered. It was my misfortune that I did not attend the Calcutta meetings and that something I said in my ignorance upset things. I wish I could talk with Bapu. I do not know if it would be right to do so. However, we shall see. I shall be reaching Bombay on the evening of 1st, or the morning of 2nd. Where shall I stay? With Shri Govindlal or Rameshwadas? You will please fix up.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

160. To Sir M. Visveswaraya

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
22nd December 1937

Dear Sir Visveswaraya,

I thank you very much for your letter. I have passed on the suggestion to the Prime Minister of Bihar and I will write to you again after hearing from him. I may be coming to Bombay for the meeting of Working Committee on the 2nd of January and if necessary will meet you for further discussion on the subject. I entirely agree that it is necessary to train local officers but I am not sure if there is anyone in Bihar who would be able to devise and plan things as we wish them to be devised and planned. May I know if it would be possible for you to guide and advise any officer whom the local Government may depute for this work? I think some guidance, at any rate in the beginning, in regard to collection of data, will be necessary and when they have been collected and sifted and a scheme prepared they might be placed for consideration and advice. I write this with great hesitation as I do not know if you will have the time to undertake this kind of work.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

161. *To Sri Krishna Sinha*

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
22nd December 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

I have received a letter from Mr. P.R. Das (copy enclosed) complaining about treatment given to Bengali-speaking natives of the Province. There are some definite cases mentioned in the letter about which you will do well to make enquiry. I propose to talk to him about this matter after my return and I should like to have a talk with you with reference to the particular cases so that I may know how things stand.

You must have seen in the papers that the Working Committee is meeting in Bombay on the 2nd of January. I shall be going there of course. You will probably also be invited. Our resolution of the Working Committee is going to be discussed and we shall have to be in the position of accused persons. We must be ready with our defence. I have asked the Provincial office to give me all the materials which they have got there but I am sure you can give me much more from reports of speeches of prominent Kisan Sabha people, particularly Swamiji, Shri Jadunandan Sharma, Shri Kishori Prasanna, Shri Ramnandan Misra, Shri Dhanraj Sharma and other prominent men. I am particularly keen on having reports of speeches made in the Gaya district at Neyamatupu Conference and at other places and also on the occasion of the rally at Patna. I am not certain if I shall be coming to Patna before leaving for Bombay. I would like to have all these materials before I leave for Bombay so that I may study them and get ready.

I am herewith sending a copy of the letter which I have received from Sir Visveswaraya. I am writing to him in reply that I have passed on the suggestion to you and inquiring if it would be possible to guide and advise the officers who may be appointed. I think it would be better if you enter into correspondence with him directly. If you are coming to Bombay at the time of the meeting of the Working Committee we may meet him and discuss with him. In the meantime try to find out who the officers of Bihar were whom he met in Patna about whom he writes in his letter.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosures not included.

162. *From Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Minister of Local Self-Government, Bihar*

Patna
22nd Dec. 1937

My dear Sir,

I have received your letter of the 20th along with the copy of the letter that you have addressed to Sri Babu.

With regard to your suggestion about amending the law so that in the forthcoming elections of the local bodies, Muslim minority may have a fixed percentage on the basis of joint electorate, I feel that there is considerable difficulty in getting this legislation passed at the next session, but if you approve of it I may make a statement in the Council that the Government proposes to introduce legislation amending the existing Act in order to provide for representation of Muslim minorities on the basis of joint electorate with reservation of seats. As the elections are all due in the month of March or April no legislation is likely to be carried within the short time to enable the new elections to take place under it, and postponing the elections for a year would mean perpetuation of the present elements in the local bodies, which cannot be considered of any good to anybody or any class. If you accept this view, kindly let me know; otherwise, if you desire that the elections should be postponed, I shall have no choice left in the matter.

As for your suggestion contained in the letter to Sri Babu, I think I shall be able to request my colleagues to look to those matters to which you have drawn our attention immediately. So far as my department goes, I have already agreed to the proposal of Dr. Mahmood to grant Rs.10,000 for purchasing implements, and Rs.20,000 for rebate on production of Khaddar as agreed to by me in discussion with Sri Shankarlalji. A request for a loan of Rs.65,000 to be made to the Spinners' Association is pending final orders. As soon as necessary information has been supplied the loan will be sanctioned.

As for the aborigines, we have so far earmarked a large sum for water supply in the areas in which they predominate. The scholarship already sanctioned for Harijans has not yet been availed of. I have requested Binda Babu to formulate a scheme which must immediately be taken up but I have not yet received any reply. I think during the vacation some constructive steps will be decided upon and when I meet you next I shall discuss how best to give effect to those suggestions of Mahatma Gandhi to which you have referred in your letter.

Yours affectionately,
Anugrah Narayan Sinha

163. To Anugrah Narayan Sinha

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
24th December 1937

My dear Anugrah Babu,

I have received a letter from Tejeshwar Babu of Monghyr complaining bitterly about the attitude and action of the Ministry regarding the Monghyr Municipality as also a formal motion of a resolution to be moved at the next

meeting of the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee on 15th January next from several members of Monghyr including Babu Nirapada Mukherji. I am enclosing a copy and you will notice that it may amount to a vote of censure on the Ministry, although in form it is not so. I do not know what has happened to give such offence to our people there and I shall be obliged if you let me know how things stand. I was under the impression that all orders superseding municipalities have been withdrawn and whatever delay is occurring is due to formalities of election etc. In Monghyr it seems they wanted a non-official Committee in the meantime pending elections etc. What objections can there be to that?

I understand you were present at some meetings at which objectionable speeches were delivered by some Kisan workers. I want a report from you. I may particularly mention some meetings in Shahabad when Shri Budhan Ray spoke at Shar and other places and meetings in Gaya District & Patna District. I want them before the W.C. meets at Bombay. Reports from other districts, if reliable, are also wanted.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Endorse not included.

164. To Sri Krishna Sinha

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
24th December 1937

My dear Sri Babu,

In October last I wrote to you to get a report about the work of the Bihar Legislature prepared. I have not yet received any report. Since then much has happened. If you refer to the Congress Bulletin number 7 dated December 2nd 1937, issued after the Calcutta meeting of the A.I.C.C., you will see reports of work of Congress Ministries in other Provinces published in it. There is no mention of Bihar. I think your ministry has done quite good work but unfortunately no report is made available to the Congress of its activities and we cannot blame anyone if he thinks that the ministry has been inactive. I think it is necessary to have a comprehensive up-to-date report for being used by me, if necessary, at the next meeting of the Working Committee when we are bound to come in for a great deal of criticism. I would, therefore, earnestly request you to have a report prepared immediately and sent to me. It should contain definite information regarding (1) release of political prisoners starting with your action about hunger strike in Andamans, withdrawal of restraint orders under Criminal Tribes Act and Public Safety Act and release of detenus, if any, and of prisoners convicted for political offences; (2) legislation completed and pending regarding peasant problem, relief from indebtedness, taxing agricultural income, control

of sugar factories and any others that you may have undertaken or wish to undertake; (3) withdrawal of suppression orders from local bodies; (4) public health; (5) labour; (6) village industries and Khadi; (7) reform of jails; (8) withdrawal of orders proscribing books; (9) return of securities of newspapers and persons; (10) prohibition; (11) repeal of repressive laws; (12) unemployment; (13) industrial and agricultural development; (14) uplift of scheduled castes and aborigines and such other heads as you may consider necessary. Please treat this as urgent.

What have you done about Mr. Brett's circular? You have received President's letter and I am sure to be asked about the step you have taken.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad.

Copy forwarded to Hon'ble Dr. Syed Mahmood, Hon'ble Shri Jaglal Choudhury, Hon'ble Shri Anugrah Narayan Sinha and Babu Krishna Ballabh Sahay.

165. *From Mahadev Desai*

Juhu
25.12.1937

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I wonder if this will be in your hands before you leave there for Bombay. But if it does, Bapu would ask you to publish the evidence in your possession proving the Kisan Sabha workers' connection with anti-Congress or violent activities. You may, if you like, omit their names—though Bapu does not think this to be necessary—but a statement seems to be essential in view especially of the Kisan Sabha Executive's resolution, in reply to the Provincial Committees. Bapu is by no means well. There are ups and downs and the b.p. does not yet show any tendency to be stable. But there is no cause for alarm.

Yours sincerely,
Mahadev

166. *To Col. Mitra, Director of Public Health, Patna*

Sadaquat Ashram, Patna
P.O. Dighaghat
25/12/37

Dear Col. Mitra,

I have received a letter extracts from which I am giving below which will speak for themselves. I shall be obliged if you kindly give me such information as you

The later hours at night, together with the laxity of the moral life, plays havoc on every side. If only really good parents knew the dangers with which they send their children, and the waste of money it involves, with the waste also of something which no money can buy, innocence and purity of life, and they would rather do anything than send their children under such conditions. A noble Hindu Centre in London should do much to counteract these things. I have marked this letter 'private' because these things are not for the Press but I should be only too glad if you cared to show it, or a copy of it, to anyone who might wish to support such a venture of path. I was so sorry to hear that you had been ill again. I saw Bapu yesterday just for a moment and was so happy to find that the crisis was nearly over.

With much love from

Charlie

168. From Binodanand Jha

GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR

R. Block

Patna

26th December 1937

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 17th instant reached me in time. We held a conference of Chairman, District Board, Muzaffarpur; Secretary, L.S.G. Deptt., DPH; Hon'ble Mr. Chaudhari and myself on the 20th. Thakur Jugal Kishore Sinha was also present in the conference. We discussed about the steps already taken and improvements that have got to be made. Notes of the discussion are marked Appendix (A) and attached herewith. We also asked the Secretary to prepare a note as regards the activities of the Government in connection with Majorganj centre. A copy of the same is marked Appendix (B) and is enclosed herewith.

After the conference was over, Thakur Jugal Kishore Sinha handed over a further list of requirements a copy of which is marked (C) and is enclosed for your reference. The problem of Majorganj is three-fold viz., (i) medical, (ii) engineering, and (iii) water supply. As regards one and three, the enclosed list will give you an idea of the contribution made by the Govt. up till now. As regards the engineering side of the problem, it is most important inasmuch as it embraces the question of water-logging and drainage. For some time past, the Government was in correspondence with the Government of Nepal, as regards the control of the course of the river Manusmara. That has not borne any fruit up till now. We called for a joint report from the Civil Surgeon and District Magistrate and their proposals with the recommendation of Divisional Commissioner reached Govt.

on the 29th Sept. 1937. Such of their proposals as required immediate orders of Government have been disposed of and are included in Appendix (B). As regards the proposals bearing on the engineering side of the question, we are expecting a note from Mr. Menon who has been asked to expedite the matter. There are two drawbacks in the way of the Government in making an effective existing law, and in practice the responsibility of Public Health of a district (both curative and preventive side) rests with the District Board. The Government agency works in an advisory capacity and the Government's finances always go to assist and supplement the resources of District Boards. Even the doctors, whom we have deputed there, are under the control and supervision of the District Board; we have no control over them. This being the case, you can well realise how the Government can make its will effective, if the District Board becomes indifferent and unsympathetic. Our other difficulty is that areas with greater magnitude of suffering of the people have been brought to the notice of the Government and we must be prepared to extend to others those benefits which we extend to the people of one place. I give below the latest figure of weekly malaria cases at the following centres of Muzaffarpur district.

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| (1) Majorganj | 1,666 |
| (2) Rampurhari | 1,921 |
| (3) Berua | 7,499 |

Besides the requirements noted in Appendix (C) Thakur Jugal Kishore Sinha presses for 30 beds to be attached to the Muzaffarpur dispensary, and free distribution of blankets to villagers. As regards the first we did not give him any promise as Government have got to examine the possibility of making similar provision in all the malarial centres and also the utility of spending a good deal of money over 30 patients only. I will, therefore, beseech your advice on this question. If it is decided upon to have beds in the rural dispensaries, the District Boards are sure to have grants from the Govt. for this purpose. Is it not more advisable to spend money for distributing medicine amongst the village folk instead of concentrating activities at one centre for 30 patients? As regards the distribution of blankets, there will not be much difficulty in getting some money for Majorganj centre, but I would beseech your advice also as regards the practicability of provision for other centres and also agencies for distributing the same. As regards the question of colonization of five villages, Thakur Jugal Kishore Sinha is of the opinion that Zamindars should be asked to help in the same. I have asked him to send a formal application for the same and we shall see that Zamindars are addressed accordingly. I would request you to help us with your advice as regards our future line of action in respect of this as well as other centres. It is superfluous to assure that the same would be acted upon. Due to Assembly session and the unfortunate accident to Hon'ble Anugrah Babu thereafter, this slight delay in replying your letter.

I am, Sir,
Yours most obediently,
Binodanand Jha

P.S. Your attention is specially invited to clause 7 of Appendix (A). Are the new arrangements suggested in the notes acceptable to B.C.R.C.?

Enclosures not included.

169. From Col. Mitra, Director of Public Health, Patna

Patna
27th December 1937

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I have received your letter of the 25th December 1937 regarding the prostitutes in fairs and melas. This horrible evil of prostitution and resultant spread of venereal diseases even to villages, deserve serious attention. The number of prostitutes at Nakhas in the Sonepur fair has been increasing from year to year. In 1934 the number of these women was 236, in 1935—245, and in 1936—302. I have not received this year's report yet.

I enclose herewith a list of public women who camped in Sonepur fair during 1935, with details of address, age, religion, attendants, rents and usual fee, etc. This census was undertaken by the Public Health Department with a view to collect a record of the public women visiting the mela area and to work out the possible measures of prevention of spread of venereal diseases. In the absence of any legislation in the Province to prevent these prostitutes from carrying on their trade in the mela area, measures for the prevention of venereal diseases are usually undertaken by "public health propaganda" and "early treatment". For this purpose, suitable leaflets in the vernacular are distributed, magic lantern lectures on the evils of venereal diseases are given at the various centres, particularly at Nakhas, an effort is made to induce every prostitute to provide herself with potassium permanganate etc. and the sale of early treatment outfits encouraged in all the five medical centres in the mela. I do not know if the prostitutes are medically examined. An uninfected prostitute may become infective any night.

From the list enclosed it would be observed that the rate of fee for the majority of women is only four annas and the unwary villagers get an excellent opportunity of contracting the disease cheaply to spread it in their own villages.

Under Section 100-B of Bengal L.S.G. and rule 3(b) of the rules regulating the grant of licences for holding fairs and melas in Bengal, the prostitutes are prohibited to settle within the fairs and melas. I have recommended to the Government the enforcement of a similar legislation for fairs and melas in this Province. But legislation alone will not eradicate the evil of prostitution nor the incidence of venereal diseases, so long as the public as a whole have not been made to realise the gravity of the problem. To tackle the problem by means of

social agencies as proposed by you will be of the greatest value.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
Director of Public Health

Enclosure not included.

170. *To T. Prakasam,¹ Madras*

Sadaquat Ashram
Patna
27th December 1937

Dear Mr. Prakasam,

I thank you for your letter. I have been staying at my village and it has done me good. I am somewhat better now although not yet free from all trouble. I have to go to Bombay for the meeting of the Working Committee and I shall be leaving on the 29th. I am enclosing copy of a statement which I have issued to the Press regarding the settlement. I have put it in a popular form so as to make it intelligible to anyone not conversant with the Bihar Tenancy Law. I am also enclosing copy of the terms of the agreement. Some of the terms of the agreement have already been incorporated in the Bill which has been just passed and the rest will be incorporated in another Bill which will be introduced in the next session of the Assembly. I think the settlement is fair although it does not concede all that the tenants wanted or needed, but in a compromise that has always to be the case. The Kisan Sabha is not likely to be satisfied with it. We shall see.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosures not included.

¹A noted Congress leader from the South, popularly known as 'Andhra Kesari'.

171. *From Vallabhbhai Patel*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Congress House
Bombay-4

My dear Rajen Babu,

I feel you are unnecessarily uneasy about our Committee meeting.

I do not think we need meet so soon. There is nothing that we have got to do at present. The Govt. have decided to carry on with bogus ministries for a time and I am sure that suits us splendidly well. Let them carry on with such worthless groups of people who do not represent this country. We have nothing to worry about nor have we to think about any new plan. We would have met much earlier if it had fallen to our lot to form ministries. Our policy for the present must be to do nothing but to wait and work. The W.C. will meet some time at the end of this month. Till then we must wait.

Are you coming to Karnataka in the Gandhi Seva Sangh meeting?

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

172. From Secretary, District Congress, Muzaffarpur

January 1938

BABU RAJENDRAPRASAD
CONGRESS HOUSE
BOMBAY-4

FOLLOWING RESOLUTION PASSED IN MEETING WORKING COMMITTEE OF DISTRICT CONGRESS EIGHTEENTH DECEMBER CONNECTED PAPERS BEING SENT FROM PATNA "COMMITTEE DRAWS ATTENTION OF ALL DISTRICT CONGRESS WORKERS TO RESOLUTION DATED THIRTEENTH DECEMBER OF PROVINCIAL WORKING COMMITTEE ABOUT KISAN SABHA ITS WORKERS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES AND EXPECT THAT ALL CONGRESS WORKERS WILL CARRY OUT DECISION AND CALLS UPON CONGRESS COMMITTEES OF THE DISTRICT TO REPORT ABOUT SUCH SPEECH AND ACTIVITIES WHICH MAY LEAD TO VIOLENCE"

SECRETARY DISTRICT CONGRESS

173. From Satyanarain, Laherisarai

BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD
C/O PROVINCIAL CONGRESS BOMBAY

ELECTION EXPERIENCE TERRIBLE KISANSABHA CANDIDATES WHEN NOT VOTED BY ELECTORS CREATE ALL POSSIBLE DISTURBANCES COMMIT VIOLENCE ASSAULT THEIR CONTESTING CANDIDATE AND HIS SUPPORTERS ROB BALLOT BOXES THUS STOP POLLING AT KAMTAUL ASSAULTED CONGRESS CANDIDATE AND SUPPORTERS AND ROBBED BALLOT BOXES JAMUNAKARJI WAS PRESENT AT LAHERISARAI KISANSABHAWALA RAIDED POLLING BOOTH IN CONGRESS OFFICE COMPOUND BROKE OPEN DOORS AND WINDOWS ROBBED BALLOT BOXES KISANSABHA CANDIDATE RAMANANDAN MISRA WAS STANDING IN HIS PRESENCE THESE ATROCITIES HAPPENED AT BAURHAR DHANRAJ SHARMA

CREATED DISTURBANCE ROBBED BALLOT BOXES SIX VOTERS SERIOUSLY WOUNDED THOSE AT PANDAUL KISANSABHA CREATED SIMILAR SITUATION ROBBED BALLOT BOXES

SATYANARAIN

174. *From Rahul Sankrityayan*

Patna

16.4.1938

Respected Rajendra Babu,

I am sure you are aware of the fact that some invaluable Sanskrit works have been found in Tibet. Of these works, one is by the famous logician of Nalanda, Dharmakirti, whom the renowned scholar of Europe Shrobitski (Leningrad) has described as the Kant of India. The work is called Pramanavartik. Commentaries on three parts of this work by Acharya Pragyakar Gupta (who himself was a great logician of the eighth century and belonged to Nalanda) have now been discovered. Notes by Acharya Karnak Gomi on Acharya Dharmakirti's self-commentary on the first part of the work have also been traced. These works were taken to Tibet from Bihar in the twelfth century. Many institutions belonging to other countries of the world can also agree to publish these works. However, these works belong to Bihar. Therefore Bihar should publish them and then present them to the world. I am aware of the fact that our State is not rich and there are many other things which need to be done inside the State. However, this task is also important and the opportunity that we now have is not likely to come again soon. In my opinion, the task of publishing these works should be taken up by the Bihar Vidyapeeth in its hands. The complete work—Pramanavartik—can be published in four volumes, each volume consisting of around 700 royal size pages. We can plan these volumes as under:

| <i>Volume</i> | <i>Year</i> | <i>Pramanavartik</i> | <i>Commentator</i> |
|---------------|-------------|--|--------------------|
| First | 1938 | First Part (Notes on, self-commentary) | Karnatak Gomi |
| Second | 1939 | Second Part (Commentary) | Pragyakar Gupta |
| Third | 1940 | Third Part (Commentary) | Pragyakar Gupta |
| Fourth | 1941 | Fourth Part (Commentary) | Pragyakar Gupta |

We do not require the services of any editor for editing the volumes as I am doing the task of editing myself. Dr. Jaiswal has since sent the first volume to the press and it has already been composed. The total expenditure on the first volume is expected to be around Rs.2,000.00. The likely expenditure on the next three volumes should also be around Rs.2,000.00 each. To give permanence to the book it would be better to print 150 copies out of the total of 500 on handmade paper.

Please arrange for the required money so that the task of publication can be undertaken by the Vidyapeeth. Many people, including some ministers, give financial assistance for a cause they think noble. The required sum can be arranged from them also. The work mentioned above occupies an important place in the history of India's culture and philosophy. Since Bihar has the privilege of being the birthplace of not only the creator of the work but also the commentators, it is in the fitness of things that it publishes the same also. An arrangement was earlier made to get the work published but some people created obstacles in the way as they wanted to take away the manuscript to the country of their liking and get it published there by some institution of their choice. We must not allow this to happen.

Yours,
Rahul Sankrityayan

175. From A.V. Thakkar

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Kingsway, Delhi
5th November 1938

Dear Rajendra Babu,

I am quoting below an extract from a letter from Sjt. Shyamal Lal dated 3rd inst. who was sent to Gaya to study the conditions there, for your information:

"Gaya is the stronghold of the Socialists and Kisan Sabhaites. I have met here most of the M.L.A.s and also B. Gauri Shanker Sinha, M.L.A. of the Central Assembly, in his village home at Rajauli. The Christian activities are mostly confined to Nawada subdivision. This subdivision is also the stronghold of the Arya Samajists. I have myself visited other villages and, in consultation with friends, have decided to put Yeshwant Sharma with his *pracharaks* at Nawada. He will get the public support also. Mr. Sharma will shift there on the 5th. The two *pracharaks* will be paid Rs. 10 p.m. We may have to start a school also here just now. I have asked one of the *pracharaks* to do teaching work for three hours and devote the rest of the time in *prachar* work. I will give you a detailed report when I return to Delhi."

Tomorrow I leave for Piru and will be there up to the 5th or 6th. I pass a night at Arrah and then go to Delhi."

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar
General Secretary

176. *From Sir Sultan Ahmed*

Patna

16th Nov. 1938

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 7th instant which I received only day before yesterday on my return from Bombay. I tried to get into touch with you here but I was told that you were again indisposed and had to leave for your home.

Believe me I had nothing but the love of my country which compelled me to write to my friend in the strain in which I did and though I did not think that he will send a copy of my letter to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, I am glad that he did so, as the latter has sent on the same to you. I claim that when the Congress decided to accept office last year, no one outside the Congress circle was more pleased than myself. I felt that we Indians had got power to do good to the people of the Provinces and those who were assuming office had tremendous responsibilities to discharge and needed our best support in spite of our differences of opinion. I felt that their action should not be criticised with hostility and that the criticism should always be constructive and not destructive. I wrote a letter to the Maharajadhiraja of Darbhanga in that light and begged of him to do all that he could to help the ministry and make it a success. For a long time and even now I feel that those who are opposed to the Congress indulge in exaggerations and tall talks and for a long time I attached no importance to the catalogue of grievances placed before me but within the last few months I was compelled to study the attitude of the Congress Ministry towards the Muslim community and other minorities and I have been led to most depressing conclusions.

The sentence that you have quoted in your letter from my letter is strong, but believe me it pained me more than you can imagine when I used it. At times I wondered if I was swerving from the path of impartiality and getting into that groove of exaggeration in which some of my Muslim friends have been indulging, but I am convinced that it is not so.

However, even now, I shall be happy if I can be of the slightest service in bringing about an improvement in the conditions prevailing. Please let me know when you are likely to come to Patna and I should like to have a couple of hours with you quietly without anybody in the world to know anything about it and I shall give you the details upon which my conclusions are based.

I hope you are feeling better on your return to the village. I feel so sorry that of all persons in the world you should be suffering from ailments: If you had just a little better health what greater amount of good you would have been able to do. As it is I know the claims on your time are tremendous but I hope that if you and I discuss matters for a short time, the time so spent will not be wasted. In the meantime please put yourself only the following questions as I put to myself in order to decide whether a detailed enquiry is not clearly indicated. There is no

doubt that the Muslims in general are up in arms against the ministry, the Bengalis have no good words to speak about them, the kisans have nothing but abuses, the landlords are dissatisfied, and the services are not happy.

(1) Can all these be due to unreasonableness on the part of the whole lot of them, or is it that things have been managed in none too satisfactory a way?

(2) Is the Ministry above communalism by which I mean not only Hindu and Muslim troubles but also Bhumihar Brahman, Kayastha, Rajput, Bengali or Bihar?

(3) Are services being filled on the basis of one's political convictions or irrespective of them?

(4) Is the Ministry really living up to the life which the Mahatma or yourself intended them to live up to?

With affectionate regards,

Yours very sincerely,
Sultan Ahmed

177. *From B. Sinha*

Main Road, Ranchi
16.11.38

Dear Sir,

Before sending this article to papers I submit it before you for your perusal and permission to release it in the Press.

Expecting to receive a reply at your early convenience.

Yours sincerely,
B. Sinha

Enclosure:

CONGRESS OUTRAGED IN BIHAR

A Happy Family

Some time past Pandit Nehru said that the Congress in Bihar is under the influence of higher class of people. But as the chance would have it, we find that today it is reduced to the body of the ministers with their allies in the Sadaquat Ashram and the *Searchlight*, with one exception of Dr. Syed Mahmood, the Education Minister.

It is no more a people's Congress. Mass has no voice today and if any person who does not see eye to eye with the aforesaid autocrats, he is declared to be a "Congress rebel", and to muzzle him further he is intimidated with disciplinary actions.

The Irony of Fate

Press in Bihar in the person of *Searchlight* is ministry-maker and the ministry is *Searchlight* maker. Papers outside the Province, believing the Bihar Congress to be a democratic body, and for other reasons, find it difficult to write anything which might reflect adversely on the Congress organisation as a whole and under this cover of shelter, the autocrats are exploiting the situation in the name of the Congress, which otherwise would have been impossible.

Monopoly

From the tone and actions of the ministry, we find that the Congress is their monopoly. They go to say that any Congressman or a nationalist who does not agree with their policy should not use Congress emblem or platform. There is a regular propaganda about it and His Master's Voice has begun to speak.

They forget that the Congress is a democratic organisation, built to this position by huge sacrifices of the masses.

Democracy means people's government. Minus masses there is neither democracy nor Congress; and if the mass is agreeable to that party of the nationalists who may not agree with the policy of the ministry, or even the higher command, what right the ministry has to ask this party not to use Congress platform. They should, rather, either change their policy pro masses or should exit.

Hypocrisy

When contesting the Legislative elections, the emissaries of the Sadaquat Ashram made many promises, such as:

- (1) To work the Constitution.
- (2) To abolish zamindari.
- (3) To reduce rents and taxes.
- (4) To reduce cost of administration.
- (5) To stop corruption in the public services.
- (6) To improve the lot of the masses.

With the exception of issuing lengthy make-believe propaganda statements, ask this 'Tory party' what they have done by which we may feel any noticeable change in our daily life.

Regarding wrecking or working the Constitution the masses of Bihar may not care much so far as they begin to get their two square meals. But taking this as an all-India issue, the working of the Constitution has very seriously affected two major Provinces, the people of which Provinces have done the greatest sacrifice and truly speaking are responsible to get all these concessions in the shape of

reforms and yet it is their lot to rot still in the jails.

Instead of abolishing zamindari, they have made unholy alliance with the zamindars in which connection there have been enough of ugly tales.

The rents are same and fresh taxes are imposed.

Cost of administration has gone up, than what it was pre-reforms. Not one post retrenched nor any pay reduced. Ministers while making a show of accepting only a comparatively lower salary are drawing heavily on the public chest in the shape of allowances. Ministers feel it below their dignity to travel below 1st and 2nd classes, while some of the Parliamentary Secretaries have drawn travelling allowances which have reached to about Rs.800 a month.

The ministry could not even resist the temptation of having a hill breeze at Ranchi and they forecast a longer stay next year.

The end is not here; the zamindari-ridden ministers who say that they are followers of Mr. Gandhi, they are for the poor whose interests are safe in their hands, they (Finance Minister in his Darbhanga tour) find a host in the Maharaja of Darbhanga. None of those people who at the command of the Congress ruined themselves during the non-cooperation days is fit to receive the Hon'ble Minister under his roof. A third-rate hypocrisy.

The lots of the masses are improved by sending some of the kisans and labourers to jail, and, not being content with the existing law to crush the mass, they are now contemplating to make new acts whereby they may silence the poor for ever.

History Made

During this period, and at the cost of having consumed large amount of public money, the ministry has made a heap of anomalous and repugnant Acts, with the result that the masses are further oppressed and the High court perhaps has to scrap most of these laws.

And they have made history too. By their indiscreet actions they have made a wide gulf between the Bihari and the Bengali community of the Province.

Licence

When corruption is on the increase, the ministers are enjoying the hospitality of their subordinates.

I speak of three cases which I hear to have happened during the ministerial stay at Ranchi:

Itki Sanatorium: For some time we have been hearing something unsatisfactory about this place. Recently a female staff had to jump in the well. But its Superintendent gave a lunch party to the Minister at the B.N. Rly. Hotel and the agitation sealed.

Indian Mental Hospital: Leaving aside other tales of this hospital, recently there was some 'golmal' with about 4,000 pieces of patients' clothes valued at

about Rs.3,000 which were reported to have been burnt in the dhobi's bhatti. There, too, the hospital gives a variety show entertainment to the Hon'ble Finance Minister and the Parliamentary Secretaries and where a cup of coffee, too, was present, the cost of which must have been debited to the patients' account. The Finance Minister comes out triumphant and in his Inspection Report says, high-efficiency of the hospital, and thus all the troubles, if any, washed in the river Ganges.

Executive Engineer, P.W.D., Ranchi: We have heard some rumblings here too. Perhaps, memorials were sent to the Government by the aggrieved parties, but here again the same old strong power of conception makes the Finance Minister see the things in his own style.

Leave aside the status of such tales—but taking only in view the Ministers accepting parties from their subordinates, why should we not infer that the ministry is a regular licence to the unpopular government servants?

Booty Shared

Posts newly created and those fallen vacant seem to be the share of those who would play the minister's tune and the rumour goes to this extent that 200 posts newly created for the Rural Development Scheme are nothing but the appointments of those who have promised to make propaganda in favour of the minister, and the forecast about inclusion of two more ministers is also a ministerial intrigue to repair the assembly split which has already become visible.

Ranchi Affairs

Recently there has been some remarkable disgust with the dictatorial powers of the Ministry & Co.

One Mr. Jaiswal, on certain allegation, was thrown out of his Presidential office by a no-confidence motion and the people selected Mr. Khwaja Bassiruddin. But the dictators overruled the people's findings simply because they like to retain the birds of their own feathers.

Whatever be the facts about the allegations against that gentleman, it is immaterial. When people do not want him he has no business to remain in office and the autocrats' actions to uphold him has ruined the very foundation of democracy. Would they have tolerated the Governor's action if he had overruled their successful no-confidence motion, if it had ever happened, against the Interim Ministry?

But how long such things could go? The Finance Minister's half-a-mile Bundu walk under police cordon, booing and hooting, are sure signs of the ministry's extreme unpopularity. People have known the ministry's true colour. They are now disgusted and want them no more.

Would They Resign?

It may hit their income hard. They would be reduced to their luxury-begotten zamindari-money. But to save the Congress from the ugly name and a big disaster they should think of an immediate exit.

"Plain speaking"

178. *To Sir Sultan Ahmed*

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
21st November 1938

My dear Sir Sultan Ahmed,

I thank you for your letter of the 16th last which I received here yesterday. I was myself painfully surprised when I read your first letter that you should have formed such a harsh judgment about the Congress Ministry in general. My desire in asking for a specific instance was to get particular incidents or actions which had created that impression in you so that I might pursue each incident for action and if I found after investigation that any action was called for to take such action to set things right. I shall of course take the opportunity of meeting you in Patna when I am there. I am afraid, however, that my health at the present moment does not permit the hope that I shall be able to do so within the next few days.

I am aware that there is much propaganda against the Congress Ministry particularly of Bihar by League circles, by Bengalis, and by Kisan Sabhaites. It is really difficult to do anything when it is not known or pointed out what it is that is wanted. So far as I am aware the Congress Ministry has done nothing to the prejudice of Musalmans and if my impression is incorrect I should be obliged to be corrected so that any injustice which may have been done can be rectified. As regards the Bengalis I have had to go into the matter in detail and have made a report to the Working Committee of the Congress which will deal with it at its next meeting. As regards the kisans I do not know if the statement which I issued the other day regarding the tenancy legislation has been seen by you. I have explained therein what the legislation has done for the kisans. If you think there is anything further that should be done for the kisans I am quite sure the ministry will give to your opinion in the matter their most earnest consideration. It is true that the benefit of the legislation has as yet not reached the kisans partly on account of the delay in legislation, and partly on account of the proverbially slow moving machinery of the Government. I am hoping that when they do get the benefit contemplated, the kisans will realise what the ministry has been trying to do for them. As regards the appointments made by the ministry I do not think any community has any just grievance. It is natural that when communities which had been backward in education are coming up they are sure to claim share in

appointments. I think the ministry has been quite fair to such communities and the so-called advanced communities cannot continue to enjoy the monopoly they had enjoyed so long. I do not think this can be called communalism. This is precisely the question that has arisen regarding the Bengalis also. I am not in touch with the services and so I am not in a position to say anything about their attitude. But I will ask the authorities to look into the matter and try to find out what their grievances are and to remove them as far as possible. I had not intended to write to you at length in view of the fact that we may meet at not a very distant date. What I have stated above is as I feel at present, and if I am wrong I shall be obliged if you correct me and give me facts to enable me to form a different opinion.

Thanking you for your kind wishes and with regards,

I am yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

179. To Vallabhbhai Patel

Ziradei
21st November 1938

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am herewith enclosing a copy of a letter which I have received from Sir Sultan Ahmed in reply to mine, as also my letter to him. As you will see, he has not given any specific grievances as I had asked for but has referred to four kinds of opposition which the ministry is meeting, viz. from Musalmans, Bengalis, Kisans and Zamindars and Services. We are aware of these but I could not imagine that Sir Sultan had these in mind when he wrote that letter. When I go to Patna I shall meet him and I will write to you what transpires between him and me.

I will give you one instance of the wild propaganda that is carried on by some Muslims of the League. A few miles from this village, a dead body of a Musalman was discovered somewhere. The police, suspecting foul play, started investigation. There had been some sort of tension between the Hindus and the Musalmans of that village some time ago and the Musalmans came forward with the claim that the body was of a particular person who had some quarrel with the Hindus on account of an incident with a Hindu girl. The case of the Hindus regarding that incident was that this boy had molested the girl while the case of the Muslim boy was that she had stolen some maize from his field which had resulted in the altercation. It was said that on account of this enmity the Hindus had murdered the boy and thrown away the dead body. A number of Musalmans came forward to give evidence that they had actually seen something being carried by a number of Hindus tied in a cloth which was probably the dead body.

A number of other circumstantial details were supplied. The police were not satisfied that the story was true and they were continuing their investigation when propaganda was started in the Press particularly by the *Star of India* that the police were trying to shield the Hindus and to suppress the whole incident. This was done on account of the fact that the Deputy Superintendent of Police and the Sub-Inspector of Police happened to be Hindus, although the Inspector, who ranks in between the two, was a Musalman. Much noise was created and thus pressure put on the police to send up a number of Hindus for trial on the charge or murder. The police, however, did not submit their charge sheet and carried on their investigation which resulted in the discovery of the supposed dead man who was in service with somebody at Calcutta. The man has now been brought and it is now admitted by all concerned that it was this person to whose death they had deposed with details. This is the main story. I do not know if any action will be taken against the false witnesses. They are now trying to find out who was actually murdered and who the murderers were. I am trying to ascertain all the facts and the comments in the papers and will let you know when I am in possession of more detailed information. This is the kind of propaganda which the ministry has to face.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

Enclosures not included.

180. *From the Controller of Broadcasting, Government of India*

New Delhi
8th December 1938

My dear Babu Rajendra Prasad,

We propose to broadcast a series of talks entitled "What is Hindustani?" designed to help our listeners to arrive at some sort of a clear notion of the kind of language that is implied when we speak of "Hindustani" as "a lingua franca for India". A great deal had been said on the subject during the course of the last year from various angles. This has aroused a considerable amount of interest in the matter, but I think you will agree that it has also created a certain amount of confusion in the mind of the average man. Apart from the general interest that All India Radio has in movements that aim at a greater unity amongst the various sections of the people in this country, any attempt towards creating and popularising a common language is of special significance to broadcasting which employs the spoken word more than any other agency in this country, and whose constant aim is to make itself intelligible to the largest possible number of people. We do not underrate the difficulties of the problem, and in fact we have been made more conscious of them than was necessary by the constant and at times

conflicting criticisms which our spoken word items in general, and our Hindustani news bulletins in particular, have elicited. Nevertheless, the problem is of such great importance to India that however great the difficulties, the efforts that are being made to arrive at a common language, should not be relaxed. Knowing your views on the subject I have no doubt that you agree with me, and I have every hope that you will consent to take part in this series by giving one talk of 15 minutes' duration embodying your views on this subject in an Indian language. I may add that for this series I propose to have seven talks in all and for the first six talks I am approaching the following speakers in addition to yourself:

Dr. Tara Chand

Dr. Zakir Husain

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad

Maulvi Abdul Haq

Prof. Narain Dev

The seventh talk will be an objective summing up of the foregoing talks.

We propose to give this series of talks India-wide publicity and, to achieve this, we shall radiate it simultaneously from Peshawar, Lahore, Delhi, Lucknow and Calcutta.

It is proposed to broadcast these talks in February and on seven consecutive days in order to give it the prominence it deserves and to sustain the interest of the listeners over the whole series. Realising that it may not be convenient for all the proposed speakers to come personally to a radio station within the same week, I propose to have the talks recorded on gramophone discs well in advance and to send copies of these records to all the radio stations concerned to be played from there on the fixed dates and time. At present recording arrangements exist at Bombay, Delhi and Calcutta only, and should you consent to participate in this series, I trust that it will be possible for you to come to one of these centres on a mutually arranged date during December, January or the first week of February to have your talk recorded.

The duration of each talk will be fifteen minutes which, as in most broadcasting organizations in the world, is the maximum for talks broadcast by All India Radio. This, delivered at a reasonable speed, roughly amounts to 1,800 words. A "very badly translated" news item of not more than about six lines will be sent to all the speakers for their comments, and a criticism of it will, it is hoped, give them a chance of illustrating their remarks in a concrete manner. These comments need not take more than a fraction of the talk, and the rest can be devoted to general views on the subject. In order to adjust the length of the talks, to arrange their sequence according to their subject matter and to enable the "summing up" to be carefully prepared and recorded in advance, I would be requesting you to send us the manuscript of your talk as early as possible, so that all preliminary arrangements can be made without undue haste.

In the end I earnestly request you to help us in making the series a success. In doing so I feel confident that I am only trying to enlist your sympathies on behalf

of a cause whose importance you realise even more than I do.

I have no need to add, if I may be permitted to say so, that All India Radio will attempt to meet all expenses that may be incurred or suggested by you in this connection, and I would be glad to have any details which you should consider fit or necessary to communicate to me in advance.

I should be most grateful to have an early reply and, if you consent to give a talk, to know as early as possible when roughly I may expect your manuscript, what date(s) would suit you for recording your talk and which of the three stations, Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta, would be most convenient to you for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
Controller of Broadcasting

P.S. I would be grateful if you could send us a telegraphic reply. Prepaid telegram form enclosed.

181. To the Controller of Broadcasting, Government of India

P.O. Ziradei (Saran)
13th December 1938

Dear Mr. Fielden,

I have received your letter No. F-10(1)LG 38 dated 8th December 1938 asking me to give a short talk on "What is Hindustani" and I have wired to you as follows:

RECEIVED PROVISIONALLY AGREE GIVE SHORT TALK WRITING

I have much interest in the subject and shall be glad to give a short talk. Fifteen minutes that you allot will be ample for me. The only difficulty about fixing an engagement is about my uncertain health in this season. But I am hoping that as the cold weather advances I shall be better and by February I may be in a position to fulfil it. I think Calcutta will suit me best. I hope only one visit to Calcutta will be required. In any case I shall not be able to undertake a journey to Calcutta before February. I shall write out what I have to say and forward it to you on hearing from you.

There is one point to which I consider it necessary to draw your attention. You may be aware that Hindi and Urdu have been fast developing different vocabularies. Although the construction and structure of both are the same, words derived from Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian have been dividing the two. There is a suspicion in the minds of Hindi writers that an attempt is being made to destroy it by importing Arabic and Persian words. Similarly there is suspicion in

the minds of Urdu writers that Hindi is going to swallow up Urdu. Unfortunately, the controversy sometimes takes a communal colour. Hindustani is expected to steer a middle course—excluding neither Arabic or Persian words, nor Sanskrit words in so far as they have become current. The complaint against Indian Broadcasting has been that it has given more prominence to those who are connected with Urdu, and the Hindustani that it has encouraged is of the Urdu variety. Even in the seven talks that you are arranging, out of the six names that you have mentioned, including mine, four are distinctly connected with Urdu and only two who are connected with Hindi, and even these two are not of the orthodox Hindi school. In order to overcome the prejudice that exists today among Hindi writers it is necessary to interest and draw in more Hindi writers of the orthodox school who are connected with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan with its headquarters at Allahabad. I have taken the liberty of making this suggestion as I am anxious that Hindustani should have a chance with Hindi writers who after all can and do approach the largest majority of those who understand and speak Hindustani and also because I want the language to develop on right lines.

One of the names mentioned by you is Professor Narain Deva. I think you mean Professor Narendra Deva, M.L.A. of the United Provinces.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

182. From Govind Ballabh Pant

Lucknow
December 29, 1938

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I have not heard from you for the last many weeks. I have been hearing from friends and seeing occasionally reports about your health in the papers, but do not exactly know how you are progressing. The accounts are sometimes satisfactory and hopeful, but when connected together one finds that progress is not steadily maintained. You are presumably taking greater care than before. Still I doubt if you are free from the strain to which you are invariably subjected. The Muslim League session must have caused you a great deal of anguish. Some people seem to have lost all sense of proportion. Sometimes one feels confounded and bewildered. Yet tales, however fantastic and fictitious, poison the atmosphere, especially when they are repeated *ad nauseum*. They have naturally bestowed their attention on Bihar as they were meeting at Patna, but they have been good enough not to forget its neighbour, the United Provinces. They can

please themselves as they choose. I have ceased to worry as reason and argument have no place in their system.

Trust this finds you well. Please let me have a line just to assure me that you are well and speedily gaining all lost ground.

Yours sincerely,
G.B. Pant

CORRESPONDENCE

PART II

1. From Mahatma Gandhi to Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy

October 17, 1934

Dear Dr. Bidhan

I thank you for your two telegrams regarding Rajendra Babu. It is a great relief to know that he is free from fever and that you are watching his progress.

Yours sincerely,
Bapu

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

¹ Noted physician of India; associate of Mahatma Gandhi. Chief Minister of West Bengal after Independence.

2. From Mahatma Gandhi to Secretary, Provincial Congress Committee, Ahmedabad

October 30, 1934

Sir,

The crediting of yarn in my name for membership of the Congress may please be discontinued henceforth. My name may also be removed from the register of Congress members in the books of the All-India Spinners' Association.

Yours,
Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

3. From Jawaharlal Nehru, President, All India Congress Committee to the President, Bihar Provincial Parliamentary Committee

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan, Allahabad
January 2, 1937

Dear Comrade,

Reports reach our office from time to time to the effect that some Congressmen are opposing official Congress candidates in the provincial elections. Whatever the merits of various candidates might be, once the final

decision has been made by the Central Parliamentary Board, there is no room for further discussion. All Congressmen must stand by that decision and anyone who deliberately go contrary to it invite disciplinary action on behalf of the Congress. The mere fact that an individual is personally so anxious to go to the legislature that he or she is prepared to flout the Congress decision is the final argument against his candidature. Too great a desire to enter the legislatures, or to have any office, is almost a disqualification for it. And those whom this desire leads to pushing themselves onwards in opposition to the decision of their own organisation, are certainly not desirable candidates.

It was to meet such cases of flagrant indiscipline that the disciplinary rules of the Congress have been recently revised by the Working Committee. Those rules are meant to be acted upon. I want you, therefore, to report to our office immediately as follows:

1. Names of Congressmen, if any, who are opposing official Congress candidates, with further information as regards their constituencies and the names of our official candidates.

2. What steps has your committee so far taken against these rebel Congressmen or Congresswomen? Has any notice been issued to them to submit their explanation or to show cause why disciplinary action should not be taken against them?

3. What further steps does your committee propose to take against them?

4. I suggest that if you have not already taken steps this should be done immediately. In addition to this, please inform all such rebel Congressmen that they should submit their explanation direct to our office for my consideration. In the event of the local or provincial executive not taking adequate action in the matter, action will be taken by us. A person who opposes and injures Congress work cannot continue to have the privilege of calling himself a Congressman. Please treat this matter as urgent.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
President

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

4. From Jawaharlal Nehru (Circular)

Allahabad
January 2nd, 1937

Dear Comrade,

I should like to draw your special attention to the Congress constitution and mass contacts resolution passed by the Faizpur Congress. By this resolution a committee has been appointed to revise the constitution with a view to

democratise the Congress still further. This committee would like your cooperation in this matter and any suggestions received will be carefully considered. It might be desirable for your P.C.C. to appoint a small sub-committee for the purpose. Reports and suggestions should reach us by the 31st March 1937.

Pending such constitutional changes, the Congress has suggested that a wider basis should be given to the Congress by making the primary unit a village or a mohalla. This can be done even under the existing all-India constitution, though it may be necessary to alter some provincial constitutions for the purpose. If so, I trust you will take early steps to make the necessary changes in your provincial constitution. We hope that these village and mohalla committees will be functioning by the end of June 1937.

Under the terms of this resolution each P.C.C. has to appoint an organising secretary. Such a secretary should preferably be a wholetime worker. Kindly let us know soon what you propose to do in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

5. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Members of Congress Working Committee

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
7-2-1937

Dear Comrade,

I addressed you some time back about the attitude we should take up in regard to certain anti-Congress activities of Pandit Madanmohan Malaviya. I have only had three replies from members of the Working Committee so far. One suggests that action should be taken, two are of opinion that the matter should be considered by the Working Committee when it meets. I am myself inclined to think that whatever action has to be taken should be considered and decided upon by the Committee. I propose, therefore, to put this matter before the next meeting of the Committee.

The matter is not free from difficulty as members no doubt realise. This difficulty is not merely a personal one, though the personal factor is important and cannot be ignored. Malaviyaji has been acting in a self-contradictory manner. On the one hand he has supported two anti-Congress candidates in the Punjab—Shrimati Shannodevi and Syt. Kesho Ram. (I might mention that Kesho Ram has been heavily defeated by the Congress candidate and Shanno-

devi is expected to be defeated.) On the other hand Malaviyaji has given his unstinted support to Congress candidates in the U.P. as also in the Punjab and elsewhere. In spite of bad health he has toured widely in support of our candidates. In some instances he has suppressed his own inclinations, such as in the case of Mr. C.Y. Chintamani, whom he would have liked to support, but because of Congress opposition he remained silent. He has further, I believe, contributed some funds towards the election expenses of the U.P. Parliamentary Board. In the U.P. he has cooperated fully with the Congress.

Then there is another matter. What possible action can be taken against him? He is not a member of any of our executive committees *except* the A.I.C.C. of which he is an ex-officio member as ex-president. To disbar him from ordinary membership seems an extreme step which seems to me undesirable and which would be widely resented. In effect he has been more an associate of the Congress than an active member.

In this connection I should like to draw your attention to the disciplinary action which has been and is being taken against various persons by provincial presidents or committees. Such action was no doubt necessary but the extent of it has to be carefully considered. Thus to disbar a person from ordinary membership of a primary committee for five years (this has been done) seems to me vindictive and wrong. I suggest that all cases of disciplinary action should come up before the Working Committee for confirmation. The necessity for immediate action is past now and we can give more careful consideration to the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

P.S. The President dictated the above letter on the 7th and left for his tour in Maharashtra and Karnataka. He has, therefore, instructed me to send this letter to you today.

Actg. Office Secretary
9-2-1937

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

6. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Sarat Chandra Bose

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
20.2.1937

My dear Sarat,

I have been receiving many complaints about the selection of candidates for the Bengal Council. I must say I am surprised to learn of the quality of candidates

selected. It appears that one of them about whom you wired to me has disdained to sign the Congress pledge. Is this not derogatory to the dignity of the Congress to offer nomination to people who subsequently reject it? The other members nominated seem to have joined the Congress after selection. Naresh Mukerji and B.C. Dutt I understand opposed Congress candidates during the Municipal elections. Radha Kumud Mukherji has been a constant opponent of the Congress and intensely communal.

Shahid Suhrawardy, if he is the person who was so long in Europe with the League of Nations, seems to be a desirable candidate although he may be new to the Congress. He is absolutely non-communal and he would be a gain.

I do not quite understand the method of selection. It appears that the single transferable vote will be used and so the order of voting will have significance. If so, I trust that S. Suhrawardy's name will be placed somewhere near the top, for his election will have a larger significance.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to

Vallabhbhai Patel
Rajendra Prasad.

7. *From residents of Asansol to Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy (President, Bengal Provincial Congress Committee)*

20 Feb. 1937

Sir,

We, the residents of Asansol, beg to approach you with this humble representation for your timely consideration as we are afraid a sheer injustice is going to be done by the proposed selection of Mr. J.N. Roy, the most unpopular and unsympathetic Chairman of the Asansol Municipality, as a Congress candidate simply because he withdrew in favour of Mr. T.C. Goswami. When you came here, we the people of Asansol, in a body not only gave you our words of honour to support Mr. Goswami but approached all the voters of this place and also at Raniganj and requested them with folded hands to cast their votes in favour of none but Congress candidates. We did this in case of Mr. Promotha Nath Banerjee also, but we are sorry to note that you are going to make a wrong and unjustifiable selection. Mr. J.N. Roy's brother Mr. Gunendra Nath Roy of Dhanbad may be a Congressman but Mr. J.N. Roy is not of the same hue and colour. He has gained his position only through official favouritism. He has spent his whole Municipal career in supporting officials following anti-Congress creed and in acting against the people. It is he who has the E.I.R. Administration exempted from water-deprivation of a big amount. Indeed it is he who has got

closed a long-standing public road by the E.I.R. No Commissioner elected by the people of this place ever supports him for his all these anti-people doings. If you do not believe us, you can have a look into the Municipal records and will be surely convinced where the truth lies. Since he has landed into the Municipality, he is in the habit of giving dinners, lunches, tea party to officials and always tries his best to support the officials' indiscreet requests and is keen to be ennobled with Rai Bahadurship. How, in the face of these anti-Congress movements of his, you are going to support him has become a mystery to us. It is yet time for you to think and select the right man in the right place and not to let an anti-Congressman to his very backbone have the Congress ticket. We can boldly and safely recommend another man, Mr. Sukhdeo Lall of Asansol, a prominent worker and a staunch supporter of all creeds, who will never betray you and the Congress, and will surely be a helping hand if he is given a chance. Even in spite of our request and prayers, Mr. Roy comes out with flying colours on a Congress ticket, the public in general will lose the general confidence it has in the Congress and its noble workers.

We remain, Sir,

Yours obediently
(Four hundred signatories)

N.B. A copy of this representation sent to Sarat Chandra Bose, Actg. President, B.P.C.C. in advance, containing 400 signatures for taking immediate action in the matter.

Copy forwarded to Babu Rajendra Prasad, B.P.C.C., for favour of his perusal and thereby do justice to us.

8. From Biswanath Das

C/o N. Kanungo
Bakrabad, Cuttack
March 24, 1937

Dear Sir,

I have sent the following wire to Babu Rajendra Prasad at Patna this afternoon:

"Rajendra Prasad Sadaquat Ashram Patna Interviewed today on invitation stop Discussed AICC Delhi Resolution stop Governor promised full cooperation but refuses prescribed assurance wire reply Biswanath Das Leader care N Kanungo Bakrabad Cuttack"

In the interview with the Governor I found that he is not at all willing to give any assurance contemplated in Delhi A.I.C.C. Resolution. Under these

circumstances it is not possible for me to give him (Governor) any hope of constituting a Ministry.

This is for your information, and further information if any will be communicated to you.

Please keep us informed if anything is to be done.

Biswanath Das

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

9. From Biswanath Das to Wilcock, Private Secretary to Governor of Orissa

Bakrabad
Cuttack
27.3.'37

Dear Sir,

With reference to the interview I had with H.E. the Governor on the 26th instant, I will feel obliged if you please inform him that I had consultations with certain leading members of my Party. I have already informed H.E. that I cannot form the ministry unless I am assured in terms of the resolution of the A.I.C.C., since it is not possible for me to accept the responsibilities of office.

It need hardly be mentioned that I have to issue a statement to this effect that the one agreed between myself and H.E. will be released for publication tomorrow.

Yours truly,
Biswanath Das
(Leader, Orissa)

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

10. From Biswanath Das to Wilcock, Private Secretary to Governor of Orissa

Bakrabad
Cuttack
28.3.1937

Dear Sir,

I had another interview with H.E. the Governor on the 26th instant on invitation. The Governor is not willing to change his position. He said that while he was willing to help the ministry to the fullest permissible extent he was not ready to give any assurance in limitation of his constitutional powers. He also said that he was willing to promise close examination and fullest consideration of the advice of the ministry. He would not, however, give any indication as to the

manner in which he would use his special powers until each matter in which the use might arise came before him.

Congress position is clear and unambiguous and was fully explained to him in course of both the interviews. Since he was not willing to give me the necessary assurance not to use his special powers of interference in regard to the constitutional activities of the ministry, no alternative is left to me but to express my inability to shoulder the responsibility of forming a cabinet.

Yours truly,
Biswanath Das
(Leader, Orissa)

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

11. From Vallabhbhai Patel to Jawaharlal Nehru

Congress House
Bombay-4
30th March 1937

My dear Jawaharlal,

I received your letter of the 28th instant just now. I have just got a wire from Rajendra Babu. He wants me to keep a meeting of the Sub-Committee. I don't think we should meet so soon. There is enough time for us to fix our future plans. In fact, we have nothing to do just at present, as the refusal of Government has relieved us of all responsibility. It is for them to take the next step. From the moves they have already taken, it seems they are out to form 'interim' ministry from the odd bits and ends of the remnants of the Houses in the six Provinces and carry on for some time. It will suit us alright. Why should we call the Sub-Committee at present? About the Working Committee, I think we must meet immediately after your Calcutta visit is over, say, on the 16th or 17th April. It is not possible to meet before that as Sjts. Bhulabhai and Pantji would not be free before the 10th April. I would, therefore, suggest that we should meet at Wardha soon after your Calcutta visit and you can fix the dates accordingly. The situation will be clearer by that time.

It appears that they will not call the first meeting of the Assembly in any of these six Provinces for some time to come. We have, therefore, plenty of time to consider our programme in opposition. I am sending a copy of this letter to Rajendra Babu.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai

After I wrote this letter to you I found that the Gandhi Seva Sangh meets in

Karnataka on the 16th. It is a one-week programme. It is, therefore, not possible to meet at Wardha on the 16th or 17th. If you wish to meet earlier you must fix the meeting on the 10th and 11th or 11th and 12th and then you can go to Calcutta from Wardha direct. If you think that we need not meet so early, we can meet in the last week of April. It may be useful to meet earlier. You can decide as you like.

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

12. From Jawaharlal Nehru to all Provincial Congress Committees (Circular)

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
March 31, 1937

(Congress Contacts with Muslim Masses)

Dear Comrade,

During our election campaign and subsequently there has been much discussion about increasing Congress contacts with the Muslim masses. Wherever we went, we found a willing response from them, an eagerness to hear the Congress message, and a desire to line up with our freedom movement. But the lack of previous work amongst them, and the paucity of trained Muslim workers, prevented us from taking full advantage of this new interest and awakening. Since then the subject has engaged the earnest attention of leading Congressmen and it has been felt that we must make a special effort to enrol Muslim Congress members, so that our struggle for freedom may become even more broadbased than it is, and the Muslim masses should take the prominent part in it which is their due. Indeed when we look at the vital problems facing the country, the problem of independence and of the removal of poverty and unemployment, there is no difference between the Muslim masses and the Hindu or Sikh or Christian masses in the country. Differences only come to the surface when we think in terms of the handful of upper class people. Even these differences are no doubt capable of adjustment if approached in a friendly manner and with the larger viewpoint always before us.

The first thing to be done is to concentrate on enrolling Muslim members of the Congress. With a large membership, they will inevitably play an important part in Congress work and will help in shaping Congress policy. I suggest to your committee, therefore, to pay special attention to this matter and take immediate steps to organise enrolment of Muslim members. I know that large numbers are waiting to be approached by our workers and will gladly join.

I suggest also that each Provincial Congress Committee should appoint a special committee to consider and take in hand this work of increasing Congress contacts with the Muslim masses, rural and urban. This Committee will not lay down any policy for that is the work of the Provincial Congress Committee. It will concentrate on the enrolment of members and otherwise interesting the Muslims in the day-to-day activities of the Congress. These activities will not of course be carried on separately by the Muslims but by Congressmen generally in each particular area.

The office of the All India Congress Committee is starting a separate department for this purpose and we shall gladly help with advice, leaflets, pamphlets, etc. The Provincial Muslim Mass Contacts Committees will naturally work under the direction of their P.C.C.s but it would be desirable if they kept in touch with the A.I.C.C. office.

There is one other matter to which I should like to draw your attention. Complaints reach our office sometimes that notices of meetings etc. are not always issued in Urdu and so many people remain ignorant of our activities and cannot join our meetings. These complaints are often justified. I should like you, therefore, to impress upon your district and local committees to issue notices in Urdu in all areas where there is an Urdu-reading population. This will apply more specially to the Punjab, Delhi and U.P. and to the larger towns elsewhere.

I shall be grateful to you if you will send our office periodical reports of the work done in this connection.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

13. From Gopinath Bardoloi

ASSAM PROVINCIAL CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE

Gauhati
1 April 1937

Dear Comrade,

The first session of the Assam Legislative Assembly commences on April 7th. It will be a brief session lasting for 3 days at the most, the main items of business being the election of a Speaker and Deputy Speaker and of members to the Assam Communication Board, Public Accounts Committee, and possibly a Rules Committee.

If we are successful in enlisting sufficient support we propose to set up a Congress member for the Speakership of the Assembly. We also propose to occupy as many seats as possible on the Committee mentioned above.

The Governor, it is understood, will address a Joint Session of both Houses on the 8th. Could we Congressmen possibly attend the occasion?

As you are perhaps aware, the strength of the Congress Party is 33 in a House of 108. As a party, ours is the biggest, the others being small groups of from 4 to 12 members. Sir Syed Sa'adulla has succeeded in bringing about a coalition of several of these groups and has formed a Ministry composed of 3 Muslims, 1 Hindu and 1 Christian. Quite a number of aspirants have naturally been left over and are likely to join hands with us in overthrowing the Ministry sooner or later.

Needless to say, I will consider it to be my duty to keep you posted up with all developments and seek your advice and guidance on all important matters.

I shall feel grateful if you kindly advise me by telegram if we can attend the Governor's address. We are holding our party meeting at Shillong on the 4th April. So the telegram may kindly be sent to me at the Assembly, Shillong.

Yours sincerely,
Gopinath Bardoloi
Leader of the Congress Party

Copy for information to Rajendra Prasad.

14. *From Vallabhbhai Patel to Gopinath Bardoloi, Leader, Assam Legislative Congress Party*

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Congress House
Bombay
1st May 1937

Dear friend,

I had received your letter of the 16th April 1937 and I congratulate you and your party for the election of Babu Basant Kumar Das as President of the Legislative Assembly of your Province. Babu Basant Kumar deserves that honour. He has made considerable sacrifice to the cause of the country in the past and we have no doubt that he will continue to do so in the future.

The salary of Rs.500 for the post of President may create hardship in individual cases and in Babu Basant Kumar's case it will, indeed, result in considerable embarrassment and hardship, but the Congress has laid down a policy which no Congressman dare alter. We have chosen the path of sacrifice and suffering deliberately and we can make no exceptions to that golden rule, except at the peril of Congress cause. The post of the Speaker to practise in a Court of Law would be to lower his position and prestige and also to lower the general standard of the public service which has been laid down by the Congress.

I would, therefore, advise you and Basant Babu to resist the temptation and not to think of his practising as a lawyer so long as he occupies that responsible and honourable position.

I had also received your letter dated 21st April, while I was at Allahabad. It would, indeed, be good if you can successfully contest the by-election due to the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr. A. Matin Chowdhury. But the Central Committee has no funds for rendering any financial assistance to the Provinces for such purposes. The Provinces have to fight by-elections on their own responsibility and hence it is for you to decide whether it would be possible for your Committee to contest the by-election or not.

In connection with the two questions that you have raised in your letter of the 21st April, I agree with you generally that we should do nothing which is not in complete accord with the programme in the Congress manifesto and the policy set forth in the Wardha resolution of the Congress Working Committee. But it is not possible to lay down any hard and fast rules in such matters. It is conceivable that in some extraordinary circumstances exception may have to be made, but such occasion may be very rare. Ordinarily, it would be unwise to lead and join the deputation or to seek election and nomination to official and semi-official bodies as suggested in your letter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel
Chairman

Copy sent to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Babu Rajendra Prasad for information.

15. From K. Nageshwar Rao, M.L.A., to the Secretary, All India Congress Committee, Allahabad

Madras
12th May 1937

Sir,

I wish to resign my M.D.A. which I already informed to the party for reasons of health. I have sent my resignation to the A.P.C.C. also. I shall send my resignation to the Government on hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,
K. Nageshwar Rao

Copy for information to Rajendra Prasad.

is alleged and proved that the candidate so recommended is not a genuine Congressman or there is something against that candidate which would justify his disqualification by the Committee. It is for the Provincial Congress Committee to decide on the question of comparative merits of the candidates who have offered themselves for the selection.

If you have any grievance against the Provincial Congress Committee or other Congress leaders regarding their attitude against you or other Kisan leaders, you must send your representation to the A.I.C.C. office. My Committee is not competent to deal with such matters. It is not for me to advise or to decide whether the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee should feel grateful to the peasants' organisation and their leaders for their attitude in the general elections, or to even enquire into the grievances of their supposed continuing hostility and indifference to the Peasants' Association. It is beyond my province to deal with these questions or to adjust or regulate the relations between the two organisations.

I have already given my sanction to the recommendation of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee for the nomination of Mr. K.S. Gupta long before I received your complaint and it is impossible for me to withdraw the orders that have been passed.

Mr. Giri was allowed to stand as a candidate to the Provincial Assembly on the strong representation of the Andhra P.C.C. and on their undertaking to successfully contest the vacancy due to Mr. Giri's withdrawal from the Central Legislative Assembly on their own responsibility, without expecting any assistance from the Centre. It would be unfair to expect them to fulfil these obligations and yet to veto their recommendation.

I have never asked you to dissuade your Kisan comrades from taking any decision they like if they are dissatisfied with the attitude of the Andhra P.C.C. They are free to do what they think best in their own interest, but if any of them are members of any Congress organisation, they will be bound by the decision of the Congress Committee and also be liable to the Congress discipline. You are right in your belief that every Congressman has a right to appeal to the All India Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee against the decision of the Provincial Congress Committee, but the final decision, it must be remembered, rests with the All India Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee and no amount of threats can influence that Committee in its decision.

It is a matter of surprise to me that you and your comrades have not been able to influence your Provincial Committee, when you feel that your case is so strong and irresistible. After all, the Andhra P.C.C. also claims, if not wholly, at any rate predominantly, the peasants' interest and there need be no conflict if the aim is to serve the peasants.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai
Chairman

18. From Vallabhbhai Patel to K. Nageshwar Rao, M.L.A., Madras

ALL INDIA CONGRESS PARLIAMENTARY SUB-COMMITTEE

Camp Tithal
(Via Bulsar)
21st May 1937

My dear Nageshwar Rao,

I have received your letter expressing your desire to resign from the Central Legislature Assembly, addressed to the Secretary, All India Congress Committee, who has sent it to me for disposal. In view of your age and health, I think it will not be proper to put further strain on you by asking you to continue as member of the Central Assembly and hence I have decided to permit you to send your resignation to the Government. I am confident, however, that you will render all possible assistance in successfully sending a good Congressman in your place to the Assembly.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai
Chairman

Copy for information to Rajendra Prasad.

19. From Sachchidananda Sinha to Mathura Prasad¹

Radha Bhavan
Solan
May 1937

My dear Bhai Mathura Prasad Ji,

I saw this morning in the papers that Babu Sri Krishna Sinha was getting up a statement for intimating to the Government that his present ministry did not enjoy our confidence, and for convening an early session of the Assembly for expressing that view. Well, so far as the question of expressing no-confidence in the present ministry is concerned, you may perhaps remember that I, along with about two dozen members of the Assembly, did so at a meeting held at *The Indian Nation* office on the 2nd of April, i.e., within 24 hours of the announcement of the formation of the ministry on the 1st of April. But in so far as the question of the holding of an early session is concerned, I do not think the Governor is likely to accede to our request, as I believe no session is to be held until perhaps the end of August, or the beginning of September—the last week of the latter month being the limit of the period before which a session must be called. But assuming

that the Governor acceded to our request, and did convene a session immediately, I would like to receive guidance from you on the point as to what is to happen at that session. Granted, that the present ministry would be voted out, and forced to resign thereby, but if the Congress are not prepared to take office, what would be the good of turning out the present ministry: just to create a vacuum by the suspension of the constitution, which would be the only alternative in that case. At present the four ministers — good, bad, or indifferent — are at any rate elected members of the Council, except Gurushay Lal, who is the Governor's nominee. Once the constitution is suspended and the Governor assumed responsibility, he may appoint as his "advisers" those who may be, from the public point of view, even more undesirable than the present ministers. This difficulty has been weighing with me for some time. You are in absolute touch with Rajendra Prasadji, and I look up to you, therefore, to confer with him on this matter, and to write to me both his and your own candid opinion for my guidance. I have not yet made up my mind one way or the other, and I am still open to conviction. It is, therefore, that I have put before you frankly the difficulty weighing with me in this matter.

I remain, with my kind regards and good wishes,

Yours affectionately,
Sachchidananda Sinha

¹ Private Secretary to Rajendra Prasad.

20. *From the Secretary to Governor, Bihar, to Sri Krishna Sinha, Leader of Congress Party in Assembly*

Governor's Camp
Bihar
16th June 1937

Sir,

I am desired by His Excellency to refer to your letter, dated the 9th June 1937, enclosing a requisition signed by certain members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly expressing want of confidence in the present Ministry and requesting His Excellency to summon the Legislative Assembly at an early date, and to say that His Excellency is considering the question of the date of summoning the Assembly and is taking into account the requisitions forwarded by you. His final orders in this matter will be announced in due course and will be communicated to you.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Sd.)
Secretary to Governor

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

21. From Anugrah Narayan Sinha to all Congress M.L.A.s (Circular)

BIHAR PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Sadaquat Ashram

Patna

19-6-37

Dear Sir,

In view of the approaching session of the legislature and in order to enable members to have a thorough grasp of the problems facing the Province and their constituencies, it is proposed to constitute the following sub-committees of Members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly and Council. You are, therefore, requested to indicate your desire if you intend to serve on any one or more and if so on which of these bodies so that you may be put in touch with other members of the same Committee to enable you to hold consultation with each other and to devise ways and means to evolve solutions thereof by legislative or any other legitimate means. I trust you will not fail to reply to this circular without any undue delay.

1. Agrarian Sub-Committee.
2. Education Sub-Committee.
3. Local Self-Government Sub-Committee.
4. Finance Sub-Committee.
5. Development and Agriculture Sub-Committee.
6. Irrigation, Floods, and Drainage Sub-Committee.

While drawing your attention to a previous circular in which you were requested to make an extensive tour of your constituencies, I am desired to enquire whether you have been able to put yourself in closest touch with your constituents and if so send a brief account of the meetings held and addressed by you or of any other form of contact which you may have chosen to adopt.

It is not yet settled but is expected that a session of the legislature for a brief period may be held on or about the 20th July and you are, therefore, requested to keep yourself in readiness to attend and in no case to be absent from a single meeting. Our responsibility in the present political situation is very great and we have, therefore, to refrain from all such actions or inactions that may lead to complications.

Yours sincerely,
Anugrah Narayan Sinha
General Secretary

Copy for information to Rajendra Prasad.

22. From K. Satyanarayananamurthy to T. Prakasam, President, Andhra P.C.C., and other members of the Executive

Pothunur, Ellore Taluk
West Godavari
25.6.1937

I filed my application with you as a candidate for the Central Assembly seat of East & West Godavari-cum-Kistna Constituency.

All anti-imperialist organisations—Andhra Provincial Ryots Association, Provincial Youth League, and the Congress Socialist Party have all unanimously supported my candidature. Of the 4 District Congress Committees in the constituency, the West Godavari District Congress Committee, the Working Committee of the East Kistna Congress Committee and, for lack of time to meet in Committee, a vast majority of the West Kistna Congress Committee members besides a large number of the East Godavari Congress Committee members and several Provincial Congress Committee members have supported my candidature by means of a written statement.

Though Mr. K. Nageshwar Rao has sent in his resignation 10 to 15 days ago, it was only announced in the papers of 28th May and applications from intending candidates were invited so as to reach the Provincial office not later than June 2nd (only 4 days' interval). 3rd June was fixed as the day on which the Provincial Congress executive meets to decide upon the candidate. Still, within the brief space of time given, all the organisations have intimated to you of their support of my candidature, even three District Congress Committees out of four of the constituency. The Provincial Congress Executive met at Ongole on 3rd June and, after a full discussion for three hours, has recommended my candidature by a majority of 8 to 5 votes.

This decision of the Provincial Congress Executive, taken at Ongole on 3rd June, should have been communicated to Sardar Vallabhbhai in the natural course of events on 4th or 5th, by the President and the General Secretary (Mr. B. Sambamurthy) as a matter of duty. But they have not only not done their duty, but also withheld this information from the knowledge of Sardar Patel for full one week, meanwhile giving full scope for their favoured candidate Mr. Tirumalarao to go about and canvass the absentee members of the Working Committee meeting at Ongole, and take letters from them that they would have voted for Mr. Tirumalarao had they been present at the meeting. After all this preliminary ground work has been done, Mr. Prakasam communicated the Ongole decision of 3rd instant on 11th instant to Sardar Patel and wrote a covering letter to the Sardar, strongly recommending Mr. Tirumalarao's candidature and opposing mine, though this action of the President is against all accepted principles of a democratic institution as the Congress. Of course Mr. Tirumalarao filed his appeal together with the recommendations of three absentee members of the Working Committee meeting at Ongole.

Sardar Vallabhbhai's approval of Mr. Tirumalarao's candidature was published in the Madras papers of 15th instant. Soon after, wires were sent by the District Congress officials of East Kistna and West Kistna and by the West Godavari Congress Committee to Sardar Patel to revise his decision in favour of Mr. Satyanarayananamurthy. As three out of the four District Congress Committees of the constituency have strongly recommended again, even after his approval of Mr. Tirumalarao was announced, Sardar wired back to Mr. Prakasam to avoid unpleasant repercussions in the districts of the constituency, let the Andhra W. Committee reconsider the whole matter including Mr. Prakasam's recommendation. Though this telegram of Sardarji had been received by Mr. Prakasam even before the Working Committee met at Nandyal on 19th instant, Mr. Prakasam withheld this fact from the knowledge of the Working Committee members and disallowed all resolutions requesting Sardar Patel to reconsider his decision, by mere fiats of his rulings.

When the Working Committee met on 19th morning, Mr. Prakasam had no majority and so he adjourned the meeting for the night. Even at the night meeting, Sardar's wire asking for reconsideration was not placed before the committee and resolutions requesting Sardar Patel to reconsider his decision were ruled out as out of order, as a result of which six members of the Working Committee walked out in protest. Having created the impression among the rest of the Working Committee members that Sardar's decision is sacrosanct and even a request to reconsider the same is tantamount to questioning Sardar's authority, tantamount to an expression of want of confidence in Sardar who is a higher authority, after the six members walked out, with Dr. Pattabhi Sitharamayya's support a resolution in support of Tirumalarao's candidature was managed to get through and the same was communicated to Sardar Vallabhbhai, creating an impression on Sardar's mind that his telegram was placed before the Committee and that the matter was reconsidered in the light of Sardar's telegram.

Furthermore, a wire of confirmation of Tirumalarao's candidature by Sardar is got immediately on 20th instant itself; another wire from Sardar asking me to withdraw my candidature is received on the same day.

In accordance with the rules of Congress discipline, I immediately withdrew my candidature, even though I knew that Sardar is entirely misled and misinformed and is made to issue those orders to me under a wrong impression.

From the aforesaid actions and conduct of Mr. Prakasam who as the President of the Andhra P.C.C. is in duty bound to act impartially, it is clear that he is partial, one-sided and has withheld truth at one stage and suppressed truth at another to accomplish his desire and, by so doing, he has done a grievous injustice and injury not merely to an individual like myself, but to the constituency, to the peasant population, to all the several organisations that have supported my candidature, besides doing incalculable harm to the parent institution, Congress

in Andhra. Hence I tender in protest my resignation of the responsible post of Joint Secretaryship of Andhra P.C.C.

K. Satyanarayananamurthy
Joint Secretary, Andhra P.C.C.

Copy to:

Sardar Patel
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Mahatma Gandhi
B. Rajendra Prasad.

23. From K. Satyanarayananamurthy

CONFIDENTIAL

Pothunur
Ellore Taluk

Respected Sir,

It is with deep regret and extreme pain that I bring to your notice the following deplorable state of affairs and the train of events that have led up to it in Andhra Desh. My only justification for this act of mine is the fervent hope that you may grasp the situation in Andhra, go deep to the very root of the matter by a thorough, proper and searching enquiry, locate the wrong and the responsibility of those concerned and set matters right, before it is too late, before the institution the reputation of which we all so jealously guard, on the integrity of which public life and public morality depend, is floundered in the mire of nepotism, selfishness and immorality. You will pardon me for these expressions—but the truth is there standing in all its nakedness, violated and dishonoured.

The Congress High Command in Andhra has by its conduct in the matter of selection of the Congress candidate for the Central Assembly seat of East and West Godavari-cum-Kistna, rendered vacant by the resignation of Sjt. K. Nageshwar Rao garu mangled truth, violated justice and thrown to the winds all the principles of a democratic institution like the Congress, to achieve its object to fulfil its cherished desire—desire born out of nepotism and autocracy, in the fulfilment of which they have not hesitated to drag in the fair name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and exploit it to their best advantage without his knowledge and permission. I am prepared to substantiate every statement of mine. Allow me to say, Sir, that I am a responsible member of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee holding till yesterday the responsible post of the Joint Secretaryship of the Andhra P.C.C. (now resigned and holding now the position of the President of the Andhra Provincial Ryots' (Kisan) Association.

That Sjt. Nageshwar Rao garu's resignation of the Central Assembly seat on account of ill health is impending is known for the past three months. The

Congress High Command in Andhra (Mr. Prakasam, the President, and B. Sambamurthy, the General Secretary of the Andhra P.C.C.) has not cared to ascertain the wishes of the people of the constituency, though there was ample time if it only desired to do so. Even after Mr. Nageshwar Rao had actually resigned, that fact was kept a close secret for ten to fifteen days, before it was finally announced to the public in the Madras papers of 28th May. Applications were invited from intending candidates and 2nd June was fixed as the last day for the applications to reach the Provincial Office, and 3rd June was the day fixed for the Working Committee to meet at Ongole to select the Congress candidate. Thus it is seen that the interval between the announcement of resignation and the last day for receiving applications is only four days, hardly sufficient for any Congress Committee to meet and recommend any candidate. (The Congress High Command in Andhra never wanted to consult public opinion in the constituency.) Still, within this short interval, the East Kistna Congress Executive met by accident and unanimously recommended my name, and a vast majority of the D.C.C. members of the West Godavari and West Kistna and a considerable number of East Godavari D.C.C. members, besides some P.C.C. members have sent a written memorandum to the Andhra P.C.C. recommending my name for the Central Assembly seat. On the 3rd of June the Provincial Working Committee met at Ongole. As required I sent Rs.50 along with my application. Be it noted that Mr. Tirumalarao did not send the fifty rupees. Out of 18 members of the Working Committee, thirteen members were present and discussions lasted for 3 hours and still the majority could not be converted to the minority point of view. Eight members voted for me and 5 for Mr. Tirumalarao. This decision of the Working Committee should have been communicated, in the natural course of events, on 4th or 5th to Sardar Vallabhbhai, by the President and Secretary Mr. Prakasam and Mr. Sambamurthy respectively. But this decision was withheld from Sardar Vallabhbhai's knowledge for full one week. Meanwhile Mr. Tirumalarao was canvassing the absentee members of the Working Committee meeting at Ongole and got letters from 3 members purporting to support his candidature. Mr. Tirumalarao filed his appeal buttressed up with these three letters through Mr. Prakasam. After all this preliminary groundwork had been done, on 11th June Mr. Prakasam communicated the Ongole decision to Sardar Patel with a covering letter strongly recommending Mr. Tirumalarao's candidature and opposing mine, in my supposed interests of health (though I am perfectly alright doing active public work from two years) though this action of the President is against all accepted principles of a democratic institution such as the Congress. Mr. Prakasam has also insinuated in his letter to Sardar that I am forced to stand, in spite of my will, by others. Sardar Vallabhbhai was asked to wire his decision immediately. Sardar's approval of Mr. Tirumalarao's candidature was published in the Madras papers of 15th instant and I, in the mofussil, could get the news only on 16th morning, 18th was the last day fixed by Government for filing nominations. So there were hardly 28 hours left for me to decide and do what I can. I filed my

nomination tentatively on 17th hoping for revision and wired the same to Sardar Patel. Wires were sent by others and letters addressed to Sardar Patel, Babu Rajendra Prasad, Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. On 17th, the West Godavari Congress Committee met in full body and by 44 voted to 12 resolved to request Sardar Patel to revise his decision in my favour and wired the same to him immediately. The officials of East Kistna and West Kistna Congress also wired the same to Sardar Patel. I need not mention that the other associations such as the Congress Socialist Party, the Provincial Ryots Association, and the Provincial Youth League did the same. As three out of the four District Congress Committees of the Constituency have strongly recommended me again, even after his approval of Mr. Tirumalarao was announced, Sardar wired back to Mr. Prakasam to avoid unpleasant repercussions in the districts of the constituency to let the Andhra W. Committee reconsider the whole matter. This telegram of Sardar has been sent on 18th. The Working Committee of the Andhra P.C.C. met at Nandyal on 19th morning at 8 a.m. The members of the Working Committee are unaware of Sardar's telegram and all resolutions requesting Sardar Patel to reconsider his decision were disallowed by the President by mere fiats of his rulings. Mr. Prakasam had of course no majority in the morning meeting as 14 members (including President) attended and seven including Mr. Kaleswararao were definitely for me—six for Mr. Tirumalarao and one neutral or doubtful. The President even refused to place the correspondence that had passed between him and Sardar on the subject and finally adjourned the meeting for the night where he said he would make a statement, which statement he refused to make at the morning meeting.

Then the general body of the P.C.C. met in the afternoon at about 3 p.m. and Mr. Prakasam wanted to convert it immediately into the Subjects Committee meeting of the Andhra Provincial Conference, without transacting any business of the P.C.C. In the notice issued for the P.C.C. meeting there was nothing on the agenda (probably part of a well-laid plan by the Congress High Command). At this P.C.C. meeting there was no attendance register, no minutes book and nothing to record the proceedings. Some members wanted to discuss this matter of the Central Assembly seat, as it was agitating the minds of the Andhra public. The President ruled out all resolutions on this subject, saying that there is no agenda for the meeting. Then some members moved an adjournment motion for the purpose of discussing a matter of urgent public importance, viz. the selection of the candidate for the Central Assembly seat. The President ruled out the adjournment motion on grounds of want of notice, even though it was pointed out to him that no notice is required for an adjournment motion. As a protest against these arbitrary and autocratic rulings of the President, 34 members of the P.C.C., out of a total of 58 present at that time, walked out, and 31 members signed a protest form and this protest form with 31 signatures lies now with Sardar Patel.

Again the W. Committee met at 9 p.m. By this time some absentee members of the W. Committee at the morning meeting, including some of those that were

absent at Ongole meeting of 3rd June, were brought in (it is rumoured they were wired to) to make up a total of 16 members and Mr. Prakasam could count upon a majority now. Having once given a signed letter in favour of Mr. Tirumalaraao they could not but side with Mr. Prakasam to save their own honour. Even at this meeting, Sardar's telegram asking for reconsideration of the matter was not placed before the Working Committee. (Of course Mr. Prakasam now alleges that telegram reached Madras on 19th, and was received by him at Nandyala on 20th only. But even on 20th did Mr. Prakasam inform the Working Committee members? At least he had not informed those that were not in favour of his candidate Mr. Tirumalaraao. Furthermore when Mr. Prakasam could get all his wanted business transacted through Sardar Patel within 12 hours by wire on 20th, it could not have been difficult for him to arrange, had he willed it, to receive the Sardar's wire at Nandyala before midnight; on 19th same day it reached Madras.) All resolutions requesting Sardar Patel to reconsider his decision were ruled out as out of order as a result of which 6 members including the two Joint Secretaries walked out. Ten remained including Mr. Kaleswararao, who supported my candidature. Having created the impression among some of the Working Committee members that Sardar's decision is sacrosanct and even a request to reconsider the same is tantamount to questioning Sardar's authority, tantamount to an expression of want of confidence in him, that he is a higher authority, after the six members had walked out, a resolution approving of Sardar Vallabhbhai's nomination was piloted through with the aid of Dr. Pattabhi Sitharamayya at midnight on 19th June. The same was communicated to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on 20th morning saying that ten were for it and that six walked out (Mr. Kaleswararao approves of Sardar's nomination, but is he for Mr. Tirumalaraao as against me?), creating an impression on Sardar's mind that his telegram was placed before the Committee and that the matter was reconsidered in the light of Sardar's telegram.

The general body of the P.C.C. was called again at night (1 a.m.) where Mr. Prakasam again refused to place any correspondence that passed between him and Sardar before the meeting. He ruled out all resolutions requesting Sardar Patel to reconsider his decision. He was even questioned if it was proper for him to give two different and opposing rulings on the same subject, one ruling at the Working Committee meeting at night, permitting it to review Sardar's decision simply because he had a majority there, and an opposite ruling at the general body where he had no majority. Proceedings were recorded on loose papers, not in the minutes book, as the President willed. As a protest against the autocratic rulings of the President, about thirty members of the P.C.C. walked out again, out of a total of less than fifty that were present.

On 20th morning I deputed my friends Dr. M. Rangayya, L.M. & S., Ellore, member of P.C.C., and P. Lakshmipathysastry of Masulipatam, Secretary, East Kistna D.C.C. and member of P.C.C., to represent my case personally to Sardar at Bombay. Besides, an appeal signed by 31 people including 5 members of Working Committee, 5 members of Provincial Legislatures and about 30

members of the P.C.C. (some P.C.C. members, one Working Committee member who walked out, and one M.L.A. who left Nandyala shortly, could not be approached for signatures) was sent through Dr. Rangayya to Sardar and it is now in Sardar's possession. Before Dr. Rangayya and P.C. Sastry and the appeal signed by 31 members reached Sardar Patel on 21st a wire of confirmation of Tirumalarao's candidature and another withdrawal order wire for me from Sardar were received at Nandyala on 20th itself.

In obedience to the Congress rules of discipline I immediately withdrew my candidature and wired the same to Sardar Patel, even before Dr. Rangayya could present my case, knowing full well that Sardar was entirely misled and misinformed and was made to issue those orders to me under a wrong impression.

From the long narrative given above it is clear that Mr. Prakasam, the President of the Andhra P.C.C., who is in duty bound to act impartially, is partial and one-sided, misrepresenting facts. He withheld truth at one stage, suppressed truth at another, to achieve his object of getting his candidate nominated by Sardar Patel and, by so doing, he has done a grievous injustice and injury not merely to an individual like myself, but to the constituency, to the several organisations that supported my candidature besides doing incalculable harm to the Congress organisation in Andhra, as a protest against which I tendered my resignation of the Joint Secretaryship of the Andhra P.C.C.

It is by an accident that I am a victim now of this ruthless repression of facts. To avoid such repetitions in future and to save the Congress organisation from disrepute and disruption in Andhra in particular and in the country in general I urge you, Sir, to move in this matter and take necessary steps to vindicate truth, honour and justice.

I beg to remain, respected Sir,

Yours obediently,
K. Satyanarayananamurthy

P.S. Copies forwarded to all members of the All India Congress Working Committee and Mahatma Gandhi and C. Rajagopalachari.

24. From A.V. Thakkar to Chandrika Ram, a student

HARIJAN SEVAK SANGH

Kingsway
Delhi, 30th July 1937

Dear Mr. Chandrika Ram,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 27th inst. informing that you have not received a Government scholarship. One of your Bihar scholars, Mr. Misirilal,

has secured a Government scholarship. I am, therefore, transferring his scholarship of Rs. 10 p.m. to you from July 1937. I am sorry it is not possible to give anything more.

Our scholarships are payable from July to June which you may please note. July scholarship will be sent in receipt of monthly progress form, 12 copies of which are being sent to you separately.

Yours sincerely,
A.V. Thakkar
General Secretary

Copies to:

1. Babu Rajendra Prasad, Sadaquat Ashram, Patna.
2. Secretary, Bihar H.S. Sangh, Muzaffarpur.

25. *From Badri Narayan Singh to Chandreshwar Pd. Narayan Sinha, M.L.A., Patna*

Kapurthala House
Clyde Road, Lucknow
The 9th September 1937

My dear Chandreshwar Babu,

Thanks for your letter of the 28th August. I am returning back the letter of Rajendra Babu with its enclosure. I am glad that you are investigating into the matter. The allegations contained therein are quite false and I like you or Rajendra Babu himself to enquire into the matter and I am sure the truth will come out. You know fully well that these mischievousness on the part of a few men are the outcome of our fight with such a powerful and organised institution in the last election. Perhaps you are aware that there has been no such complaint against my estate since we have taken up the charge. I am quite alive to the trend of events and I fully rely on my tenants as my mainstay.

Yours sincerely,
Badri Narayan Singh

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

26. *From Biswanath Das to Vallabhbhai Patel*

CONFIDENTIAL

My dear Sardarji,

I have received a letter from Babu Rajendra Prasad that you wired him to go to Cuttack to know from me the situation created by the appointment of Mr.

Camp Polasar,
15-10-1937

Subodh Chatterji as Judge of the High Court, Patna. A statement regarding this was published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 8th. I sent a contradiction immediately which was also published. Since the subject matter is highly confidential I did not desire to communicate to you in a letter. This was specially so as we had to meet at Wardha on the 22nd and 23rd and also at Calcutta, in the Working Committee. The facts are these.

There was a serious difference of opinion between the Governor of Orissa and myself at Puri on two important issues. The first relates to the passing of a file relating to the grant of Police Medal to two constables. The Governor consulted the Inspector-General of Police through the Home Secretary without my knowledge and finally showed me the file and wanted my views. It is to be understood that I had issued a circular warning Secretaries not to have any communication with the Governor without the only constitutional channel of the ministry. This was also shown to the Governor. Since then this practice of direct communication of the Governor with the Secretaries ceased. He justified this communication as direct communication with the Home Secretary on the ground that it related solely to his discretion. I said I cannot tolerate any direct communication of the Governor with my Secretaries. He held that the Secretaries are Secretaries to the Government and that he is part of the Government. I said that I would not agree with him in this interpretation and that the Ministry is the Government and as such I would not allow any such direct communication with the Secretaries. I said, if he thinks that he has initiative in such matters he can correspond himself with any other person. If he wishes to have anything done through the Secretaries or the Heads of Departments including the Inspector-General of Police it must be done through me. I went further and said that he has done a grave injustice in a case such as this. I am the Minister in charge of the Home Department. He had chosen to award 2 Indian Police Medals to two of my constables: if in such cases initiative does not come from me (ministry) the position may be serious. It may be that he may award Police Medals to two constables and I may award them punishment at the same time. This will have serious repercussions. Therefore, I said that in all such cases the initiative must come from me and also communication should pass through me as the sole constitutional channel. He did not agree with me and referred to the Act. We differed in the interpretation. He then said that we shall consult our Law Officers. I said no useful purpose could be served by consulting Law Officers. This is a question which concerns the status of the ministry and I cannot agree to be satisfied by consulting our Law Officers. After certain discussions I said you have appointed the Advocate-General in whom I cannot have full confidence and the Legal Remembrancer is a man of the Secretariat. If an interpretation is necessary, I would rather have it done by the Federal Court and accept the decision. Till such decision is given I cannot agree to your direct communication with the Secretaries. It was at this stage that we left this question and discussed about the question of the appointment of Subodh Chatterji.

The second related to the appointment of Mr. Subodh Chatterji, an Advocate

of the local Bar at Cuttack who was taken as a Judge of the Patna High Court. The Governor, I presume, must have been consulted in this matter. He, however, kept it away from me in such a way as to make it difficult for me as also for any other person to know it. When the fact was made known and I got the information from the local newspapers, I asked him to state whether Mr. Subodh Chatterji was nominated as Judge of the Patna High Court and whether he was consulted. I also stated that it is unfair that I should get the information from the newspapers instead of direct consultation in a case such as this. He first evaded the issue and finally admitted that he was consulted by the Governor-General and that Mr. Subodh Chatterji has already been appointed as Judge of the High Court. The question necessarily, therefore, arose as to why he selected this gentleman without my consultation. His justification was that the said appointment vested with the Governor-General in his discretion. As such any consultation by the Governor-General cannot be expected to be divulged to me as he is directly responsible to the Governor-General in cases of such consultations. I took a serious objection to such a course of action. I said that if this is the attitude of a Provincial Governor it is impossible to work together in harmony and much less with goodwill. My position was that I should be regarded as the constitutional adviser of the Governor in all cases, including such cases. If the Governor-General had selected a man outside my Province for such a job I had absolutely no complaint. In a job such as this which concerns also my Province it is manifestly unfair if suggestions for selection is done by the Governor without my advice. I further said that I am not only the first citizen but also the representative of the citizens and tax payers of this Province and I cannot have such things tolerated if done without my consultation. The Governor went on to add that if this is taken as a matter of right the Premier as well may demand consultation in cases of appointment of the Governor of Orissa. I said, time has come when Indian public opinion would demand this and no Premier of any Province will tolerate if such selections are effected in spite of their opposition. These are done, as a matter of course, in all dominions and there is no reason why it should not be done in India even in 1937. After a lot of discussion on the lines indicated he said that he was consulting even in matters relating to his discretion. Since these are demanded as a matter of right he would rather think of withdrawing such consultations. I told him plainly that I do not require to be consulted in any matter which he thinks to have done or will hereafter do as a matter of grace. I, as Premier of Orissa, said that I demand consultation in everything that is being done, whether it is discretionary or otherwise. Both of us, though controlled our tempers, were practically feeling that a termination of our relationship is near at hand. My colleague, Hon'ble Dube, was at Puri. I consulted him and also thought of consulting the other colleague, Hon'ble Kanungo and the Standing Committee of the Party as to the further action to be taken. Myself and the Governor met again the next day. To my surprise I found him cooled down. Regarding the first point he said that he would come to some sort of arrangement with me regarding his communication with the Secretaries

through the channel of the ministry even in matters relating to such cases. Regarding the second he said that I (Premier) may have a talk with the Governor-General when I go to the Industries Conference in December and if the Governor-General thinks that the Premier should be consulted even in such things he will abide by his (the Governor-General's) decision. I told him that my relationship as Premier of Orissa extends only to the Governor. It is unfair to be asked to see the Governor-General. As Leader of the Congress Party I cannot go on with petitions of complaint before the Governor-General. The spirit in which it has come shows that there is a change in your attitude; I would therefore leave it to you to consult him. For myself I said I will discuss with my colleagues regarding the suggestions that have emanated from him, the Governor. This is in short the tussle that I had with the Governor and the situation was thus avoided.

Yours sincerely,
Biswanath Das

Copy to Sjt. Rajendra Prasad.

27. From Jawaharlal Nehru (Circular)

Camp Gauhati
November 29, 1937

Dear Comrade,

You must have seen the comment of Gandhiji on the A.I.C.C. resolutions, notably Masani's¹ resolution and the Mysore one. He has stated that these resolutions violated truth and non-violence and the Mysore resolutions were *ultra vires* of the A.I.C.C. Opinions will no doubt differ on the merits of these resolutions. But apart from the merits, the criticism is about truth and non-violence and about the legality of one of them. As Chairman of the Committee I am naturally concerned and if the criticism is justified, I acted erroneously. I want to understand this and to find out where my error lay. I wrote to Gandhiji immediately on the publication of his article but unfortunately he has not been well and the message he sent me in reply did not clear my doubts. I am receiving numerous letters on the subject asking for my opinion and I do not know what to say in reply. Unless I am convinced to the contrary I must hold by my previous opinions and act according to it whenever opportunity arises.

I am greatly exercised over this matter and at one time I thought of issuing a Press statement. I drafted this on my way to Assam but later decided not to issue it. I am, however, sending you a copy of it with this letter.

I shall be grateful if you could let me have your views on the two points raised. I need not add that I do not want views on the merits of the resolutions.

Please mark your reply 'Personal' and send it to the Anand Bhawan, Allahabad. I expect to be back on December 13th.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Dr. Rajendra Prasad.

M.R. Masani.
Enclosure not included.

28. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Sri Krishna Sinha, Prime Minister, Bihar

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

PERSONAL

Swaraj Bhavan
Allahabad
December 27, 1937

Dear Sri Krishna Babu,

I understand that your Advocate-General is being paid much more than Rs.500 a month. The salary apparently is Rs.500 but other allowances mount up to Rs.2,000 or more a month. If this is so then it is contrary to the Working Committee's direction. May I know what the facts are? These might be sent to Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

29. From Jawaharlal Nehru to Sri Krishna Sinha

Camp Saharanpur
December 1937

Dear Sri Krishna Babu,

I have read in the newspapers with great astonishment the circular issued by the Behar Chief Secretary to the Commissioners and District Officers. Anything more impertinent and insulting I can hardly conceive of. I take it that this circular could not have been issued without the consent of the Governor. In any event this shows a spirit in the Secretariat which is absolutely undesirable. I think that a

speedy and effective action should be taken. The nature of this action will have to be decided upon by you. But it should be a public condemnation by you of the Chief Secretary's action. The Governor should also be informed that you take the strongest exception to what the Chief Secretary has done and this raises vital questions which may precipitate a crisis. The circular must be withdrawn and the Chief Secretary should apologise to the ministers for it. Indeed I think that you should inform the Governor that a Chief Secretary who behaves in this manner is not fit for his post. He must be given some other job. I am quite convinced that in this matter the strongest line must be taken by your ministry.

Apart from the contents of the circular I think that no important circular should be issued at all by the Chief Secretary without the knowledge and permission of the Minister concerned. That, I am told, is the practice in the U.P.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Copy to Rajendra Babu,

30. From the President, City Congress Committee, Cawnpore, to the President, Provincial Congress Committee, Lucknow

September 1938
Cawnpore

The City Congress Committee of Cawnpore in its meeting of the 2nd September 1938 discussed an important question regarding the policy of hoisting the National Flag over school and college buildings. This question came for discussion before my committee as a result of certain action which Dr. Jawahar Lal Rohntgi, Vice President of the City Congress Committee, had taken on the issue of hoisting the Congress Flag over the D.A.V. College buildings by the College students on the last Independence Day, the 26th of January 1938. In short I would place before you the history of the whole incident.

A representation from the students of the D.A.V. College, Cawnpore, was sent to the Principal on the 24th of January 1938, asking his permission to hoist the Congress Flag on the College building on the Independence Day. The Principal forwarded the representation to the Local College Management Committee. The Local Committee met and resolved that as the matter of hoisting Congress Flag on the College building involved a question of policy, the Local Committee was not competent to decide it and that the matter be referred to the D.A.V. College Trust and Management Society which was the proper authority to decide the question.

The decision of the Local Management Committee was communicated to the students who, in spite of the Committee's orders, did hoist the flag on the College

dome on the 26th of January 1938. The Local Management Committee again met to consider the action of the students. Dr. Jawahar Lal happens to be the Secretary of the Committee. The Committee decided to issue a notice (attached herewith as Ex.No.1) asking the students to remove the flag before the morning of January 27th, 1938. Now, on this notice Dr. Jawahar Lal also placed his signature as the Secretary of the Managing Committee.

The students held a meeting and passed a resolution condemning Dr. Jawahar Lal's action and asking my Committee to recommend to the P.C.C. disciplinary action against him. It was thus that the City Congress Committee came to be seized with this question. Early in February this year, the Committee discussed the question and resolved that Dr. Jawahar Lal be requested to explain his point of view. Just after this, circumstances so conspired together that neither my Committee nor Dr. Jawahar Lal remembered this incident, we all became so engrossed in other more important affairs that the question remained untackled so far.

The question, however, ultimately was raised and Dr. Jawahar Lal submitted his explanation (Ex.3). The explanation satisfied some members like me, but to others it gave no satisfaction. Heated discussions helped but little to clarify the issues. I therefore suggested to the Committee that as the question involved honest differences of opinion amongst members, it should be ultimately referred to you and the P.C.C. for final decision. The Committee agreed to my suggestion.

I am, therefore, submitting the question to you for our guidance in future. The Committee wishes that you may be pleased to give opinion on the following points involved in the question.

Firstly, how far are students of an institution justified in hoisting the National Flag on school or college buildings against the wishes of the Management?

Secondly, was it proper for Dr. Jawahar Lal to put his signature to a prohibitory order against the Congress Flag?

Thirdly, if the answer to the second question be in the negative, then, should my committee recommend any disciplinary action against Dr. Jawahar Lal?

Fourthly, how far it is proper for Congressmen to be on Committees where such seeming conflict of duties might create confusion in the public mind?

I personally feel that, being on the Managing Committee of the D.A.V. College, Dr. Jawahar Lal did act properly in asking the students to remove the flag, especially when the Committee had decided against hoisting it on the College building. But other members of the Committee feel very strongly on the point, asserting that as Congressmen we cannot put our seal and signature upon any order which demands removal of the National Flag or prohibits its being hoisted on a building. What are we to do? *Tamaso ma Jyotirgamaya.*

President
City Congress Committee

P.S. Dr. Jawahar Lal Ji, in the last paragraph of his statement, refers to a resolution of the Municipal Affairs Control Board appointed by the City

Congress Committee. The resolution in question is attached herewith as Ex.4. The resolution has a history. The Municipal Board of Cawnpore had passed a resolution asking all its aided institutions to hoist the National Flag. Some Muslim institutions took serious exception to the resolution and tried to draw a red herring across the track by calling our flag as communal and sectarian. The situation became tense. The Congress members of the Municipal Board approached the Control Board for guidance. In view of the situation prevailing then, the Municipal Affairs Control Board of the Congress Committee passed this resolution for the guidance of the Congress Municipal Commissioners.

Copy to Rajendra Prasad.

Enclosures not included.

APPENDICES

1. The Sind Observer on the Communal Award

We publish below the introductory portions of the statement made on the Communal Award by His Majesty's Government on Aug. 16th, 1932, and also some portions of the letter of the British Prime Minister (the late Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) published with the announcement.

It is clear that the British Government considered it to be a disagreeable duty to have to pronounce this award, as there was no agreement in India on the question between the various communities about the distribution of the loaves and fishes; the percentages and averages of representation, and on 'joint' versus 'communal' electorates.

This award was made applicable provisionally to the Provinces. It was made clear that before the Government of India Act (of 1935) was passed, if the communities agreed among themselves, this award would be replaced by the agreed settlement as applying to all or some of the Provinces.

It was further laid down that this award would be in force for ten years and thereafter some machinery would be devised to ascertain whether it should continue or be replaced or modified.

But even after ten years, if there is no agreement between the majority and the minority communities, the British Government would not do anything to cancel the award or modify it without the common consent of all the parties concerned. It would simply continue.

Three years after the announcement of this award the Government of India Act of 1935 was passed. It framed also a constitution for the Centre, fixed the communal proportions of representation, and the method and manner of representation at the Centre, and embodied the whole of the Communal Award in the Act itself.

The ground was thus cleared by His Majesty's Government for the Hoarean reforms of 1935.

Whether the Communal Award was acceptable or not to the people of India, or to the majority community, or to any of the minorities, is beside the point. It was the decision of His Majesty's Government. It should be in force for ten years; after ten years full enquiry is to be made as to its continuance or modification; even after ten years it would not be changed without the common consent of majorities as well as minorities, and until then the British Government stands committed to it without the change of a comma or semi-colon.

Such being the position, the problem now before India is not the communal or the minorities question, which was settled for ten years by the British Government. The question is one of Central responsibility, as the federal constitution is withdrawn, and an irresponsible Central Government is bossing it over responsible Provincial Governments. The question is one between the people of India on the one side, and Great Britain on the other, as to Dominion Status

after the war, to be immediately heralded by some strong popular control over the Central Government as it exists at present.

The question as between the communities of India—separate electorates, weightages, etc.—was settled by the Communal Award and the Muslim League or any League cannot raise this question until 10 years from 1935 or earlier only with the common consent of the rest of the Indian communities.

The Muslim League, if it wants a change, must approach the Congress, the Hindu Maha Sabha, the Harijans, the Indian Christians, the Anglo-Indians and the Europeans and the others for a reconsideration of the Communal Award and also to frame a constitution for India at the Centre with justice for all the communities, now that the federal constitution is under suspension.

British Government's Statement

The following are extracts from the British Government's statement announcing the Communal Award:

"In the statement made by the Prime Minister on 1st December (1931) last on behalf of His Majesty's Government, at the close of the second session of the Round Table Conference, which was immediately endorsed by both Houses of Parliament, it was made plain that if the communities of India were unable to reach a settlement acceptable to all parties on the communal questions, which the conference had failed to solve, His Majesty's Government were determined that India's constitutional advance should not, on that account, be frustrated and that they would remove this obstacle by devising and applying themselves a provisional scheme.

"On 19th March last His Majesty's Government, having been informed that continued failure of the communities to reach an agreement was blocking the progress of the plans for the framing of the new constitution, stated that they were engaged upon the careful re-examination of the difficult controversial questions which arise. They are now satisfied that without a decision of at least some aspects of the communal problems no further progress can be made with the framing of the new constitution.

"His Majesty's Government have accordingly decided that they will include the provisions intended to give effect to the scheme to be laid before Parliament.

"His Majesty's Government wish it to be most clearly understood that they themselves can be no parties to negotiations, which may be initiated with a view to the revision of their decision, and will not be prepared to give consideration to any representation aimed at securing modification of it, which is not supported by all the parties affected. But they are desirous to close no door on an agreed settlement, should such be happily forthcoming. If, therefore, before the Government of India Act has passed into law, they are satisfied that communities, who are concerned, are mutually agreed upon a practicable alternative scheme, either in respect of anyone or more of the Governors' Provinces or in respect of the whole of British India, they will be prepared to recommend to Parliament that the alternative should be substituted for the

provisions now outlined."

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in his letter announcing the decision said: "We never wished to intervene in the communal controversies of India. We made that abundantly clear during both sessions of the Round Table Conference, when we strove hard to get Indians to settle the matter between themselves.

"We should only be too glad, if at any stage before the proposed Bill becomes law, the communities can reach agreement amongst themselves. But, guided by past experience, Government are convinced that no further negotiations will be of any advantage and they can be no party to them.

"I am thinking of the future. I want to see greater and smaller communities working together in peace and amity so that there will be no further need for special form of protection. In the meantime, however, Government have to face facts as they are and must maintain this exceptional form of representation.

"In the end only Indians themselves can settle this question. The most that Government can hope for is that their decision will remove an obstacle from the path of constitutional advance and thus enable Indians to concentrate their attention upon solving many issues that still remain to be decided in the field of constitutional reform. Let the leaders of the Indian communities show at this critical moment in India's constitutional development their appreciation of the fact that communal cooperation is the condition of progress and that it is their special duty to put upon themselves the responsibility of making the new constitution work."

2. *An article by Rajendra Prasad on Communal Award, published in the Hindustan Review (September 1934)*

THE CONGRESS AND THE COMMUNAL AWARD

The resolution of the Working Committee of the Congress on the "Communal Award" has been subjected to very severe criticism. This is as was to be expected, as it dealt with a very important subject which has naturally exercised the public mind greatly. It is, therefore, necessary to examine the arguments urged against the Working Committee's resolution closely. It should be remembered that the Congress and the Working Committee are not in a position today to write on a clean slate. There are certain commitments, resolutions, and policies which have been expressly or tacitly accepted and acted upon. It is also not correct to think that the Congress can accept or suggest solutions of problems facing the country which are the very best and ideal from a theoretical point of view. It has again and again to face facts and circumstances beyond its control and shape its policy to suit the requirements of the nation which it seeks and aspires to represent. Everyone acquainted with the history of the Congress knows that, rightly or wrongly, the Congress entered into a pact with the Muslim League in 1916 and conceded separate electorates to the Musalmans. The Lucknow Pact was

accepted by the Government for fixing not only the method of representation but also the quantum of it in the Montagu Constitution. The resolution of the Congress adopting the Lucknow Pact has never been rescinded, as indeed it could not be at the instance of any one party. It is, therefore, not quite right to say that the Congress has always stood for joint electorates pure and simple. It is also worth remembering that the Lucknow Pact was not the creation of the present Working Committee, most of whose members were not occupying the position, which they do today, in the counsels of the Congress then.

The Congress from its very earliest days has tried to conciliate and attract members of the minority communities. This is true not only of the post-Jalianwalla Congress, but also of its predecessors. It is equally untenable to suggest that the Congress in its dealings and activities does not recognise communities as such. It has been one of the recognised conventions of the Congress to shut out discussion or decision of religious or socio-religious matters when a majority of the delegates representing any community are opposed to any such discussion or decision. This, however, is not the same thing as saying that the Congress is a communal organisation. Indeed, it has from its very inception set up pure nationalism as its ideal and has endeavoured to break down communal barriers. At the same time it has refused to shut its eyes to facts and adopted attitudes and taken solutions which fall short of that ideal. This is the only way in which a national organisation, seeking not only to represent but also to guide and educate all the different elements in the body politic of India, could reasonably act. The Working Committee by its resolution has done no more and no worse than carry on this policy of the Congress.

Every Indian must feel ashamed that we are not able to solve this communal tangle to the satisfaction of all by our own efforts. The attempt has been made more than once in India and in England and we have failed. The reasons are obvious. Having no power in our hands, we have to depend upon a third party and that third party has given a decision. The events leading up to that decision are fresh in public mind. The Indian members of the Round Table Conference had failed to arrive at a settlement amongst themselves and the Prime Minister was asked by some to give a decision. He in turn asked the members of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference to give a promise in writing that they would accept and act upon the decision when given. I believe several of the prominent Hindu members of the Minorities Committee of the Conference gave that promise. Whether in pursuance of that or independently of it, the Premier gave his decision. It contains a challenge to Indian nationalism and promises a revision of the decision in accordance with any solution which the parties concerned agreed to. This promise has been acted up to, at least in one respect, as a result of the Yerwada Pact. It is, therefore, necessary to have in view this background when looking at the resolution of the Working Committee. The Working Committee and, in fact, all nationalists have condemned the so-called Communal Award in a language which has varied in virulence according to the temperament of the individual using it but not in substance. In doing so, the

Working Committee has given a lead to the country as a whole including the Musalmans in a matter which has evoked such difference of opinion, because the Working Committee conceives it as one of its functions to give such a lead on all matters of public moment. It yields to none in its appreciation of the baneful effects of the communal decision as it stands. It is also clear in its object that that decision has to be altered and that that alteration should be the result of an agreement. It recognises the fact that the Government is not going to alter it as a result of pressure put upon it by a section, albeit the largest section, but still a section, of the Indian people particularly when it has given them the option to alter it by agreement among themselves. So far as the decision and the determination to alter it are concerned the Congress is at one with all those gentlemen in and outside the Congress ranks who are not in agreement with the Working Committee's resolution.

The question, therefore, arises, how are we going to bring about this agreement? Surely we are living in a fool's paradise if we imagine that the British Government is going to modify it to please the Hindus. It would be against all experience of at least recent years. Supposing all the Hindus and all the Sikhs joined in saying that they rejected the award—but I am not sure that it is an altogether correct supposition when we remember that the representatives of the Depressed Classes, such of them and as many of them as are likely to be in the next Assembly under the present Constitution, will join the other Hindus in rejecting the award—we shall still have to consider that on the other side there will be Muslims, most of the Christians, whether Indians, Europeans or Anglo-Indians, and perhaps representatives of some other communities also voting in favour of it. There will be a perfect stalemate in the Assembly and the country will be no better or wiser than it proved itself to be in the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference. How is this voting going to alter the decision? Since everyone concerned has disclaimed the intention of getting an agreement on the communal question or alteration of the decision by coercion exercised against any minority community, one is entitled to assume that every individual and every party aims at its modification by persuasion and agreement.

The question has been often asked: what is the Congress there going to do to bring about modification of the award? May not the Congress put the same question to those who do not agree with the Working Committee? If the award is not to be changed as a result of coercion of the Muslims, what other alternative is there except persuasion, which includes education of the Muslim masses, into an appreciation of the anti-national nature of the award and securing its rejection at their hands? It is utterly wrong to say that the Working Committee has accepted the award. It has not done so and could not have done so when it knows that the bulk of Hindu and Sikh opinion is against it. It will thus appear that the Working Committee and Pandit Malaviya and Sjt. Aney are agreed in their condemnation of the Communal Award and in their determination to get it modified and that modification has to be by agreement of all the parties concerned. The only difference which emerges is, whether it is necessary, expedient, wise and

conducive to the object both have in view to get also a resolution of the Assembly saying in so many words that the nationalists reject the award. The Working Committee thinks that it will serve no useful purpose to do so, specially when so far as the expression of public opinion on its merits is concerned, it has helped to formulate and express it in unequivocal terms. The Working Committee has further felt that an organisation like the Congress, which seeks and claims to represent all the elements in the country, may not reject it when it knows that one community at least as a whole, in spite of exceptions, accepts it.

This position of the Working Committee has been assailed on various grounds. It has been said that the Congress has not only to represent but also to lead and guide opinion in the country. This is precisely what the Working Committee has done in the case. It has both correctly represented the position as it stands and sought to improve it by formulation of the correct opinion on the subject and hopes to bring about that improvement by education, persuasion and subsequent and consequent agreement. It has held that by taking up the position which is favoured by one section, although the larger section, and rejected by another section, no useful purpose will be served. On the other hand, the chances are that its work in the direction of propaganda and persuasion might be hampered. If it could be shown that by saying that the Working Committee or the Assembly rejects the decision its rejection was more likely to be secured and an agreed settlement is the only alternative to the Premier's decision, it seems there is no alternative to the position which the Working Committee has adopted.

It is said that the Musalmans as a body do not accept the award and in support of this assertion the claim of nationalist Muslims that they have majority of the Muslim masses on their side has been cited. Professor Abdul Majid Khan is indignant that the Muslim community is traduced and insulted by the suggestion that it accepts the award. He goes so far as to say that "the Working Committee have forfeited the confidence of the Muslim masses by not rejecting summarily the Award which neither safeguards their rights nor advances their interests and under which they can never rise to their fullest stature". It gives one's soul pleasure to find such sturdy nationalism and the hope of the Working Committee lies precisely in such sturdy nationalism which is bound to assert itself sooner or later, but the unfortunate fact may not be denied today that this is not the general Muslim attitude. The Working Committee will without a moment's hesitation change its opinion if the Muslim masses through their spokesmen and representatives confirm the view so eloquently put forward. The moment this claim is made good, the main reason behind the Working Committee's decision will disappear and it will be bound to reject the award. The Working Committee will not only welcome such a consummation but is prepared to work for it in its own way. The nationalist Muslims have always laid this claim and the Working Committee is prepared to do its best to help them to make it good. It is no use twitting them that till yesterday they claimed to represent their community and today the Working Committee ought to bind them to their word. Their position is the same now as it has always been. But statecraft and diplomacy have for the

time being thrown them into the background and clouded the issues. It is because the Working Committee has faith in the Muslim masses, as much as it has in the masses of other communities, that it has chosen the line of least resistance for approaching them. There is no condemnation involved of the community but only a recognition of facts which bear also the potentialities of the better and more nationalistie elements asserting themselves in due course.

Then it is said that the Congress cannot claim never to oppose what one community approves and in other matters, e.g. in changing its creed in favour of independence, it never consulted the Muslim community nor does it represent the entire Hindu community in its campaign against untouchability. On both these points there is no such clear cleavage on communal lines. It will be remembered that it was a Muslim who year after year urged the Congress to change its creed and not a few amongst the prominent Muslim leaders supported the change of creed. It was under the presidentship of a Muslim that the Congress for the first time at its Madras session expressed itself in favour of independence. Indeed, the complaint of Muslim leaders like the Ali brothers and Moulvi Muhammad Shafi Dandi used to be that the Congress is not genuine in its demand for independence. Whether these last gentlemen were genuine in their demands for independence or not there is no gainsaying that they have had some part in bringing about a situation which has resulted in the communal decision and they accept it. As regards the campaign against untouchability, if a larger section of the Hindu community is opposed to it, there is also a large and growing section which is in favour of it. The Congress is seeking to convert to its view the former by propaganda and persuasion, but there also it has recognised the existence of a class which is regarded as untouchable by a section of the Hindus and is seeking to ameliorate their position. Even in its resolution on this very communal decision, untouchability, as existing for the time being, is recognised.

It is wrong to imagine that the Working Committee treats the resignation of a revered leader like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya lightly. Panditji's services to the country and particluarly to the Congress from its very birth have been so great that anyone having the least sense of responsibility and the least acquaintance with its history could not but contemplate with the greatest distress his severance for the time being even on one single point. It is only an overwhelming sense of what the Working Committee considers it to be the right thing to do in the present circumstances that it has chosen to adopt a separate course. It is no less true of the Working Committee than of Malaviyaji and Mr. Aney that they have parted company on this single point of procedure to seeure modification of the communal decision with mutual regret. The Working Committee was prepared to give freedom of conscience on this question to all but it was not prepared to allow every difference of opinion even on this matter to be raised to the dignity of a question of conscience. If the members to be returned on the Congress ticket have to do team work, they have to subordinate their individual opinions to the opinion of the party which works as a delegate of the Congress. No party as a party can work in any parliamentary institution if every

member is allowed freedom of opinion. Where, however, it is lifted from the range of mere opinion to the status of a question of conscience, the Working Committee was prepared to respect it.

Is it too late to hope that a via media may still be found and the forthcoming Assembly elections may not be fought on this issue? But if the worst comes to happen, one can only hope that the election campaign will be conducted with dignity and mutual respect and without bitterness, for, after all, the point of difference is one, while the points of agreement are, I believe, numerous; and after the dust and the din of the present controversy have subsided we have all to work side by side and shoulder to shoulder for bringing about that consummation which we all wish for, namely, a United Free India.

3. A critical review of Rajendra Prasad's article entitled "The Congress and the Communal Award"

THE CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON COMMUNAL AWARD: BABU RAJENDRA PRASAD'S DEFENCE

The September number of the *Hindustan Review* contains a very readable article under the caption, "The Congress and the Communal Award", from the pen of Babu Rajendra Prasad. The article purports to be an attempt to "closely examine the arguments urged against the Working Committee's resolution" but even a cursory perusal suffices to show that it is chiefly a reply to the arguments urged by the present writer in the two articles contributed by him to the *Hindustan Review* on the same subject. No reader of Babu Rajendra Prasad's article will say that it is lacking in ability, clearness, or vigour, while everyone will readily admit that it is almost impossible to improve upon the admirable temper and spirit which the distinguished Bihar leader has brought to bear on the discussion. If, in spite of all this, Babu Rajendra Prasad's defence of the Working Committee's resolution must be pronounced a failure, it is for the simple reason that his cause was so palpably weak that no amount of skilful or energetic advocacy could possibly make it succeed.

It is a strange circumstance, by the way, that in all their various pronouncements in defence of the Working Committee's resolution, neither Mahatma Gandhi nor his immediate lieutenants have even for once referred to the famous speech made by the Mahatma at the second Round Table Conference on the so-called Minorities Agreement; and that whatever reference has been made to it has been done by the critics of the Working Committee's resolution. It cannot surely be that the former have ceased to be proud of that speech, of which the rest of the nationalist India is still so justly proud. To my mind no commitment resolution or policy of the Congress can be either more sacred or more binding on the Congress Executive than the speech which the Mahatma made on that historic occasion, when he had not only the Working Committee

but the whole of the civilised world for his audience. And what did the Mahatma say in that speech? "If this responsible government, whenever it comes, is to be inaugurated under happy auspices," he said, "the nation should not undergo the process of vivisection to which this scheme subjects it; it is a strain which no national government can possibly bear." Again: "The scheme gathered by Sir Hubber Carr is the negation of responsible government, the very negation of nationalism. Heaven help India if India have representatives elected by these several cut-up groups." Here is still another passage: "If this is to be *sine qua non* of any constitution building, then I say it will be much better for us that we should remain without so-called responsible Government." Lastly, "The Congress will wander, no matter for how many years, in the wilderness rather than lend itself to a proposal under which the hardy tree of freedom [grew]." No responsible person will deny that the Premier's award, as originally published, was in essence and substance identical with the scheme condemned in these words by the Mahatma and that even today (except on the single point—the representation of the Depressed Classes—which the Mahatma himself got changed by his historic fast) it is still identical with it. And yet while the Mahatma as representing the Congress had no hesitation in rejecting that scheme, he and his associates think that the only attitude they can properly adopt towards its alter ego—the premier's award—is that of neutrality. Was there ever a greater tragedy in the affairs of a nation struggling for self-government than this?

It is gratifying to find that in his article Babu Rajendra Prasad does not lay the excessive stress he did in his previous statement on the impossibility of the Congress as a national organisation rejecting an award which is accepted by one section of the people of India, though he does make a passing reference to it. He bases his defence of the Working Committee's resolution chiefly on the ground of expediency. "The Committee", he says, "has held that by taking up the position which is favoured by one section, although the larger section, and rejected by another section, no useful purpose will be served. On the other hand, the chances are that its work in the direction of propaganda and persuasion might be hampered. If it could be shown that by saying that the Working Committee, or the Assembly, rejects the decision, its rejection was more likely to be secured and an agreed settlement made more easily achievable, the Working Committee might well be blamed for giving away that chance." Can Babu Rajendra Prasad be unaware that this last is exactly the position of the critics of the Working Committee's resolution? Their contention is, and from the first has been, that not only would the formal rejection of the award by the Congress and the Assembly facilitate the actual rejection of the award, but there is no other or better way in which that end could be secured. Of course, the award can be actually rejected only in one of two ways: either by the fulfilment of the condition laid down by its authors for a modification of the award, namely, an agreed settlement among the various parties concerned, or by the British Government realising the mistake they have made in giving this award, and in laying down this condition, and altering their decision even without the fulfilment of this condition. But as I have

said already, there is not the smallest chance of either of these things happening unless the Congress or the Assembly, and all these public organisations which claim to have a national character, formally reject the award. I entirely differ from Babu Rajendra Prasad's view that such rejection would hamper the work of the Congress in the direction of propaganda and persuasion. The exact reverse of this is the truth. No propaganda and no effort will ever be possible on an effective basis as long as the Congress retains its present attitude of neutrality. In order that such propaganda and such efforts may succeed, the first essential thing is that the policy of the Congress should make the widest possible appeal to the country. That is exactly what the present policy does not do. It is as little calculated to induce the Muslim communalists to reconsider their position as to inspire confidence in those opposed to the award. The former are encouraged to persist in their present attitude; the latter are definitely alienated.

There is one other aspect of the matter which Babu Rajendra Prasad and men of his way of thinking have not at all considered. They have had much to say about the British Government's "promise to alter the decision in accordance with any solution which the parties concerned agreed to" but they have entirely overlooked the fact that this promise is subject to time limit. Any agreed settlement can take the place of the award only before the White Paper on Constitution, with the award as a part of it, is passed into law. Once the Act is passed the present promise will necessarily become inoperative, and fresh legislation will be needed to alter the award. If, therefore, the award is to be altered according to the promise of the British Government, now clearly is the time for it. If no attempt to have the award rejected were made now, the award would become law, and a fresh body of vested interests would be created, and the task of getting the award altered would then become immeasurably more difficult than it is today. Need I say that this is exactly the result to which the decision of the Working Committee inevitably leads? By remaining neutral with regard to the award at the very time when according to every canon of reason, expediency and constitutional propriety it should set itself vigorously to work to secure the rejection, not only a golden moment for a revision of the award slips through its fingers, but makes all subsequent modification of it extraordinarily difficult. Statesmanship in the Congress must, indeed, have become bankrupt if it cannot see a thing that is so perfectly patent.

4. Rajendra Prasad on the Bihar Tenancy Bill

26 September 1934

When the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur of Darbhanga asked me to see him in connection with the amendment of the Tenancy Act I readily agreed. At the first interview he mentioned to me that the clause relating to *bakhasi*, which has

created opposition, had been dropped from the Tenancy Bill and asked me if the Bill should be proceeded with. I gave opinion without consulting friends as I had not studied the question at all, but that I would be able to do so later. I discussed the matter with my friends and in company with Babu Sri Krishna Sinha¹ and Babu Baldev Sahay.² I had a second talk with Maharajadhiraja Bahadur. Raja Bahadur of Amawan, Raja Sahib of Surajpura, Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay and Babu Ganga Vishnu of Muzaffarpur were present on the second occasion.

The first question which I asked Maharajadhiraja Bahadur was whether any opinion that we expressed was going to be treated as a consent which could bind us or the tenants later on. We were assured by the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur and the other gentlemen present there that there was no question of any agreement or settlement, that the Zamindars were going to make certain concessions independently and irrespective of any promise or consideration on the part of the tenants and that the right of tenants and Congressmen to press for any further amendments in the law would not in any way be affected.

To emphasise the point I told them that as a Congressman it was not open to me to be a party to any settlement which was short of the Karachi resolution on fundamental rights. This position was accepted by all.

In answer to the next question which was put by Babu Baldev Sahay and related to the clause about certificate powers, we were assured that the clause had been dropped. There was no question or suggestion that it was going to be retained in an amended form and there was no discussion at all on its merits in view of the statement that it had been dropped altogether.

With regard to *salami* and the right of transfer we were told that the amendment was much more favourable to the tenants than a similar amendment in law in Bengal where *salami* was fixed at 20 per cent of the consideration money and the landlords were given right of pre-emption. Babu Baldev Sahay pointed out that the clause in the amendment Bill in Bihar was confiscatory, because under it *salami* was paid at present or where there was custom of transferability without payment of *salami*. The Maharajadhiraja pointed out that there were few places where such custom prevailed but being pressed that that being so it was all the more reason why the clause should be so framed as to exclude such places from the operation of the Bill, the Maharajadhiraja Bahadur said that the matter was worth considering and the Zamindars would consider it.

After these points had been discussed we were asked if the Bill be proceeded with. I said that since our right to ask for further amendments was not affected and the Bill was claimed to be a one-sided concession, it might be proceeded with. I was asked if I had any objection to giving this opinion in writing. I said I had none but before committing myself to paper I would naturally like to examine the Bill and would then give, if required, my considered view on this as also on other points of the Bill.

It was arranged that Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay³ would give us a copy of the Bill and discuss it clause by clause with Babu Baldev Sahay and that after

a discussion with Babu Baldev Sahay I would issue a statement.

What followed is contained in the correspondence published below:

Copy of letter to Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Sir Kameshwar Singh

5 August 1934

My dear Maharajadhiraja Bahadur,

In continuation of the conversation I had with you I was expecting that Babu Baldev Sahay would be furnished with a copy of the Tenancy Bill as it would stand after the amendments mentioned by you and that of discussing the whole thing with Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay. I understand that he has not received the Bill nor has he had any opportunity of meeting Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay, who is not at Patna. I am told that the proceedings of the meeting of the Landlords Association, as published in Press, say that the clause relating to *bakhist* will be withdrawn but are wholly silent regarding the clause about certificate powers to the Zamindars. On our questioning about this clause, we distinctly understood you and the other gentlemen present to assure us that the clause relating to certificate powers would also be omitted or withdrawn. I trust that is the position even now and the proceedings as published are defective in this respect.

I have had opportunity of talking over this matter with friends, who are interested in the tenants, and also representatives of tenants. Since the measure, as you said, was going to be passed at the instance of landlords and not as a result of any compromise or settlement, they have only to say that they do not regard their right to make further demands as in any way affected. They particularly state that the Bill, even after the proposed amendments, would be seriously objectionable inasmuch as it makes a heavy *salami* compulsorily payable in case of every transfer whereas no such *salami* is paid in many places and none is payable in others even under the law. Some friends go further and say that no *salami* should be paid at all. I have thought it necessary to communicate what I have gathered from the people with whom I have talked.

With kindest regards.

Copy of letter from Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Sir Kameshwar Singh

Darbhanga House, Simla

12 August 1934

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Many thanks for your letter. I am forwarding a copy of it to Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay and I am asking him to write to you regarding the details of the Bill. The Bill does not contain, as far as I recollect, the clause regarding the certificate power.

As regards the second para of your letter we still claim that it is based on the result of compromise arrived at with persons who were regarded as prominent

spokesmen of the tenants.

At our conversation we distinctly asked you and Babus Sri Krishna Sinha and Baldev Sahay whether you advise us to proceed with the Bill or to drop it and we were told by you that you approved of our carrying on with it and I was, therefore, naturally rather astonished to see the reports in the Press regarding the meeting held at Babu Baldev Sahay's house in which we were condemned.

As regards the question of *salami*, you will remember that Babu Baldev Sahay admitted that there were extremely few places where *salami* was not being realised and I regret to see that such a great deal of fuss is now being made over the question.

I still hold that the Bill which is going to be introduced in the Council is one of pure and undiluted concession and I hope that after you have studied the Bill you will be in a position to agree with what I say.

You say that the representatives of the tenants do not regard their right to make further demands in any way affected. The question naturally arises who the representatives of the tenants are, if they are real representatives or only pseudo leaders and whether they will be regarded as representatives in future also.

There is bound to be a section of people who will in future be out to divert the vested interests and who would like to see a class war.

In conclusion, let me tell you how sincerely I appreciate the frank way in which you have written and I have no doubt that you will not take amiss what I have written.

With kind regards.

Copy of letter to Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Sir Kameshwar Singh

Patna
18 August 1934

My dear Maharajadhiraja Bahadur,

Many thanks for your letter of the 12th Aug. I have had enquiries made about the clause relating to certificate powers in the Tenancy Amendment Bill. Babu Gurusahay Lal who is member of the Select Committee informs me that the Bill remains as amended last year :: the Select Committee with regard to this clause and that not a word was changed in the last meeting of the Select Committee. It means that the clause remains. I saw the Raja Sahib of Surajpura who assured me that the clause was not there, but a reference to the Bill itself shows that it is in the Bill. I would, therefore, request you to have this matter cleared.

The real difficulty as I apprehended in bringing about better relation is that the Zamindars do not seem prepared to recognise any organisation like the Kisan Sabha as representing the kisans and insist upon their nominees representing them.

As regards the conversation I had with you, it was made perfectly clear and, I believe, equally clearly understood by all of us, that you regarded the Bill, as

amended, by dropping the clause relating to the certificate powers and *bakast* land, as one of pure and undoubted concession and we told you that we would have no objection to your proceeding with it so long as it was not treated as an agreed measure and so long as the right of Congressmen and of the tenants to press for their claim for further changes in the tenancy law in favour of the tenants was not affected. To that position I adhere.

With kind regards.

Copy of letter from Maharajadhiraja Bahadur Sir Kameshwar Singh

28 September 1934

My dear Rajendra Babu,

I acknowledge the receipt of your telegram regarding the publication of correspondence that passed between us in connection with the Tenancy legislation. I have no objection to your publishing the same.

It is, however, regrettable that the subject matter of the correspondence was commented upon in the Press even before the publication, and I have been accused of a breach of promise made to you.

As I have already indicated in my statement, Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay, as a result of the compromise arrived at between the parties, wanted to amend the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 in a way in which the right for the recovery of rent by certificate procedure would have accrued to the landlords as a matter of course under certain conditions. That amendment was one of two provisions that was severely criticised and the Select Committee dropped it inasmuch as its controversial feature has been taken away and there is now the *status quo ante*. There was no question at any time of dropping the section as it stood in the Act of 1885. The controversy centred round the amendment of Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay and not the section in the Act itself.

With kind regards.

¹ One of the founders of *Searchlight*, Patna, and President of Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council from July 1921 to November 1922; Vice-Chancellor of Patna University in 1936.

² Advocate-General of Bihar in the first Congress Ministry in Bihar in 1937.

³ Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay—A Zamindar of Baghi in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar. Became an M.P. after Independence.

5. Editorial in the *Searchlight* dated 26 September 1934 on the Bihar Tenancy Bill

TENANCY BILL AND THE MAHARAJADHIRAJ

We are glad Baboo Rajendra Prasad has released for publication the full text of the correspondence that passed between him and the Maharajadhiraj Bahadoor of Darbhanga on the subject of the Tenancy Amendment Bill, now enacted into

law. He has also appended by way of introduction a short résumé of the conversation that took place between him and the Maharajadhiraj as also between him, Baboo Sri Krishna Sinha and Baboo Baldev Sahay on the one hand and the Maharajadhiraj, the Raja Bahadur of Amawan, the Raja Sahab of Surajpura, Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay and Baboo Ganga Vishnu of Muzaffarpur on the other. The readers will now be able to judge for themselves whether the observation made by us in an earlier article on the subject that there has been clear breach of faith in the matter of the retention of the provision for the realisation of rent by certificate procedure, was justified or not.

Throughout the conversation both the Maharajadhiraj and the Raja Sahab of Surajpura went on assuring Baboo Rajendra Prasad and his friends that the clause relating to the certificate powers had been omitted or withdrawn. The Maharajadhiraj Bahadur even in his replies to Baboo Rajendra Prasad's letter says that "The Bill does not contain as far as I recollect the clause regarding the certificate powers." Thereupon Baboo Rajendra Prasad in his letter dated the 18th August drew the attention of Maharajadhiraj to the fact that despite his assurance and that of Raja Sahab of Surajpura a reference to the bill itself showed that the clause was there.

Maharajadhiraj tries to wriggle out of this uncomfortable position by the diplomatic explanation that the clause in the form in which Rai Bahadur Shyamnandan Sahay wanted to amend has been dropped and "there is now the *status quo ante*". "There was no question", says he, "at any time of dropping the section as it stood in the Act of 1885." But does the language, clear, explicit, and unequivocal, as it is used in his letter or in the course of the conversation, convey in any sense what he now trots out in his defence? It was a clear categorical statement of what was already a fact and not what it was proposed to be done. If the *status quo ante* was to be maintained where was the sense in introducing that clause in the amending bill? The other sections of the Bengal Tenancy Act that have not been amended and been left intact, have not been reproduced, and rightly so, in the amending bill. And a reference to the clause, as it stands in the original Act and as it exists in the amending bill, will make it clear that it is not the *status quo ante* that has been maintained but altogether new clauses in amended forms have been introduced therein.

Clauses (1) and (2) of Section 158A of the original Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885 run as follows:

158A. (1) Any landlord (other than the Government) whose land is situated in an area for which a record of rights has been prepared and finally published and in which such record is maintained, may apply to the Local Government through the Collector of the District, in which the land is situated, for the application of the procedure prescribed by the Bengal Public Demands Recovery Act, 1913, to the recovery of the arrears of the rent which he alleges are, or may accrue, due to him for lands in such area.

(2) The Local Government may reject any such application or may allow it

subject to such terms and conditions as it may see fit to impose, and may at any time add to or vary any terms or conditions so imposed or withdraw its allowance of the application, without in any of these cases assigning any reason for its action.

Now in the above sub-section (1) the amending bill (now enacted into law) omits the words "and in which such record is maintained" and substitutes the entire sub-section by the following wholly new clauses:

(2) (a) The Local Government, if satisfied that the landlord's rent roll is kept up-to-date, that his accounts and collection papers are properly maintained and that proper rent receipts and counterfoils are regularly given and kept by him as required by Sections 56 and 57, may, if he thinks fit, allow the application.

(2) (b) When any such application is disallowed the authority disallowing the application shall record its reason for so doing.

Again another important amendment that the bill introduces in this Section is that an entirely new sub-section is added as sub-section 10 which runs as follows:

(1b) The Local Government may delegate any of its powers under the section to the Board of Revenue or the Commissioner of the Division. All orders passed by the Commissioner in pursuance of such delegation shall be subject to the revision of the Board of Revenue and the Commissioner shall, in the exercise of any powers so delegated to him, be subject to the control of the Board of Revenue.

Is this *status quo ante*? we ask in all seriousness! The Local Government while allowing the application for certificate power will not, under the amended clause, impose such terms and conditions as it may see fit to do while under the provision contained in the original Act they might allow the applications "subject to such terms and conditions as it may see fit to impose or may at any time add to or vary any terms and conditions so imposed". The Local Government under the old clause might withdraw its allowance of the application without, in any of the cases, "assigning any reason for its action". But this provision is entirely absent in the new amended bill. Again the new provision gives powers to the Commissioners to grant this power. In any case of disallowance of application the authority concerned will have now to state reasons for doing so. If the *status quo ante* was to be maintained and if there was no idea to make granting of this power easier and its application wider in extent, why were these amendments introduced at all? As we said earlier, while writing on the subject, the power is but nominally retained in the hands of the Local Government. In practice it will be exercised by the Commissioner of the Division, who will be easier to be approached and propitiated by the zamindar than the Local Government for the grant of that privilege. We have, no doubt, the assurance of Mr. Whitty that the

Local Government will be careful and vigilant in granting this power. But we know how far assurances like these are generally acted upon in actual practice. Be that as it may, it is clear that the claim that the *status quo ante* has been maintained is mere bosh and will deceive none.

The argument, therefore, that is now advanced—clearly an afterthought—that the provision is not what was originally introduced is entirely beside the mark and will not hold water. It will not in any sense refute our charge that there has been a clear breach of faith in this matter. The publication of the full text of correspondence by Baboo Rajendra Prasad and his report of the conversation that took place clinches the issue once and for all, and we wish the Maharajadhiraj and his brother landlords the joy of their achievement. But let them not delude themselves with the belief that their “undiluted concessions” have settled once and for all the great agrarian problem of the Province.

6. Associated Press release (21 October 1934) on the reception given to the President-elect Rajendra Prasad on his arrival in Bombay

BOMBAY, Oct. 21.—A great welcome was accorded to Babu Rajendra Prasad, President-elect of the forty-eighth session of the Congress, when he arrived at Bombay this morning.

Escorted by Mrs. Naidu, Mr. K.F. Nariman and other leaders, the President-elect took his seat in a gaily decorated coach of four horses, which drove in a slow procession to the Congress House. A number of mounted volunteers carrying tricolour banners, following immediately after the pilot car, formed an impressive advance guard. Fifty “Desh Sevikas” in saffron saris with their captains leading on bicycles immediately preceded the President-elect’s carriage while a score of volunteers formed the vanguard.

Volunteers and policemen lined the entire route to the Congress House, keeping back a seething mass of humanity which had taken hold of every position of vantage all along the route, to catch a glimpse of the huge procession. The traffic was at a complete standstill at Boribunder for more than half an hour.

The President-elect passed through seven gaily decorated arches erected *en route*, and flags and festoons were in evidence all along the route. Babu Rajendra Prasad was received at the Congress House by the President and members of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee and was garlanded, whereafter he proceeded to the Congress Nagar.

7. Report in the Searchlight dated 21 October 1934 on the reported retirement of Mahatma Gandhi from the Congress

BOMBAY, Oct. 21.—With the arrival of Babu Rajendra Prasad and Dr. Ansari today, the Congress leaders’ forum has already begun in right earnest.

Gandhiji addressed the Working Committee today at length, explaining why he placed special emphasis on the Khaddar programme and village industries in the economy of national life. The address was meant as much to make converts as to emphasise the sentiments that moved him to take up the position he has taken up. Many Congressmen are still not clear as to what is meant by Gandhiji's withdrawal from the Congress. The two interpretations put on it are, firstly, that Gandhiji would cease to be even a four-anna member which is technically borne out by Gandhiji's statement and, secondly, that Gandhiji would remain an ordinary member of the Congress but would not be one of the Executive. The majority of Congressmen are under the impression that Gandhiji's withdrawal means the latter. Those, however, who are in close touch with Gandhiji, believe that his statement is open to one interpretation only and that is that he will cease to be even a four-anna member of the Congress. This interpretation is further reinforced by these leaders' statements that if Gandhiji remains a member of the Congress the leadership will be *de facto* his and no executive would move an inch without consulting him.

While, however, technically the position is as described above, the fact remains that Mahatma Gandhi's withdrawal from the Congress will not in any sense mean retirement from politics. In fact, as one prominent Congress leader told the Associated Press representative, "Gandhiji is taking politics out of the Congress. Politics means nothing more or less than social and economic uplift and these spheres will be under the active control of Gandhiji either through the All India Spinners' Association or the Harijan Board or the Village Industries Association." This leader added, "What it really comes to is this, namely, there will be no central uniform programme for the Congress. Thus those among the leaders and the rank and file who believe in Gandhiji's economic and social programme will give him all the help and support they can, and those who believe in parliamentary work will put their energies in that direction." According to this leader the Bombay session is to be another landmark in the history of the Congress, namely, that it will reconstruct the Congress by making it shed further its purely demonstrative function and rendering it more businesslike and, secondly, by so arranging the Congress programme on parallel lines as would give scope to the various elements to contribute their best without internal conflict. In fact, the Gandhi section has gone out of its way to help the Parliamentary wing and do so with all its influence so that this section might have a proper start to prove the efficacy of its method. Gandhiji believes that some good can come out of Parliamentary work and is prepared to make it a permanent nature of Congress activity, but he also holds that the real Congress work lies in the promotion of Khaddar, uplift of the Harijans, and economic uplift of the masses. He has always conceived the need of running the Congress through autonomous departments and a central executive so that the Congress may thereby prove that it has the national well-being at heart, that its executive is able to grasp the national welfare and conduct the proceedings in a manner the Government Cabinet would do. Gandhiji had this ideal before him at Nagpur in

1920 but yielded to pressure to the extent that Congressmen were not ready to accept his advice fully. He tried these changes again at the Lahore session, and succeeded partially. Now he has brought forward further changes in the Congress, similar to the original ideal put forward at the Nagpur Congress. There can be no question that Gandhiji has not put forward these suggestions as a parting gift. He has put them to make the Congress an organisation of his dreams so that, sooner or later, when he again assumes the maiii control, he may have at his command a body fitted to fulfil the role of service, parallel to the existing machinery of the Government, so that, if and when the day comes for the Congress to assume the Government of the country, it may have men duly trained for the task and ready to assume the responsibility and prevent chaos.

8. Report in the Searchlight dated 24 October 1934 on Gandhiji's arrival in Bombay on the eve of the 48th session of the Indian National Congress

BOMBAY, Oct. 20.—Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress President had conspired between themselves to keep it a secret as to where Mahatma Gandhi would detrain. Thousands of people had gathered at all stopping stations and at the Victoria Terminus, wanting to have a darshan of Mahatma Gandhi, but they had all to go home disappointed as Mahatma Gandhi detrained at Matunga (non-stopping station) by a special arrangement with the railway guard and quietly drove to Abdul Ghaffar Nagar.

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the Congress President, Mr. K.F. Nariman, Chairman of the Congress Reception Committee, and Mr. Bhulabhai Desai, General Secretary of the Congress Parliamentary Board, received Mahatma Gandhi at Matunga and quietly brought him to Worli in car, thereby avoiding any demonstration.

The Associated Press correspondent was the first to greet Mahatma Gandhi when he arrived at Abdul Ghaffar Nagar, to whom he remarked: "Hello, you are already here!"

After Mahatma Gandhi had exchanged greetings with those who were present at the Nagar at such an early hour, the Associated Press correspondent told Mahatma Gandhi that he should spare a few minutes to answer a few questions to which he replied that he had already said what he had to say, and now he wanted to know what others had to say.

"But Mahatmaji," the correspondent persisted, "there is a general feeling in local Congress circles that if all your amendments were, with the spinning franchise modified (that is, restricting it to only the office-bearers and the All India Congress Committee members), accepted by the Subjects Committee and the Congress you may be persuaded to continue the leadership of the Congress. What have you to say to this?"

Mahatmaji replied: "It is a supposition and I am not aware of it and therefore

at this stage I do not want to answer such a hypothetical question."

The Congress President, intervening, said: "Who says that there is such a feeling among Congressmen? I see several of them daily, but none has told me this."

At this stage someone remarked that this has appeared in the Press to which the Congress President retorted: "The Press may say many things. But how do you know that they are all correct?"

The interviewer persisted in his question to Mahatma Gandhi when he said: "Subject to what the All India Congress Committee has to say, I have decided to retire. That is definite enough I suppose?"

Interviewer: "That is too vague, Mahatmaji, and what the public are anxious to know is whether you will reconsider your decision to retire if the All India Congress Committee, by a majority, with the exception perhaps of Sardar Patel and a few others, appeals to you not to retire at this stage."

Mahatma Gandhi: "You are again asking a hypothetical question, which involves equation also, namely, you will have to decide that Sardar's opinion is equal to the opinion of how many members of the A.I.C.C. You decide this equation and then I will answer your question."

As Mahatma Gandhi desired to be left alone, presumably because he wanted to discuss some important questions with the Congress President, all were asked to clear from the place and that brought the interview to a close.

With the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi at the Congress Nagar, it has become more lively than it was during the past few days. Several people, wanting either to see Mahatma Gandhi or discuss with him one question or other, have been pouring in.

Three goats to provide milk for Mahatma Gandhi were brought to Congress Nagar.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Member, Working Committee, has arrived.

9. Report in the Searchlight dated 24 October 1934 on the reception accorded to the President-elect of the 48th Indian National Congress, Rajendra Prasad

BOMBAY, Oct. 22.—To say that a grand, rousing or warm reception or ovation was accorded to Babu Rajendra Prasad, President-elect of the 48th Indian National Congress, on his arrival at Bombay, would not at all enable the reader to adequately picture to himself the demonstration one witnessed on Sunday last, of people's love, affection and enthusiasm for their beloved tribune, who has been called to guide the destinies of the nation and steer the Congress barque through troubled waters at the present moment. It was, they say, one of the most picturesque and spectacular demonstrations that have ever been witnessed in the annals of Bombay, which successfully vindicated her reputation of being the premier city and the centre of all Congress activities in the country.

From Kalyan to Bombay

Even from Kalyan, from where the President-elect, with his party, was taken in the beautifully decked special train, all intermediate stations, right up to Victoria Terminus, were thronged with eager and expectant crowds, jostling each other in their endeavour to have a darshan of their beloved leader. At Kalyan the Municipality presented an address encased in a silver casket in which his magnificent services in connection with Bihar earthquake were mentioned in glowing terms. At Thana Station, where the crowd was the biggest, the Vice-President of the Municipality and the representatives of 27 other local associations, garlanded Rajendra Babu and literally buried him under flowers. At Ghatkopar also an address printed on Khadi was presented by the Ghatkopar Municipality and thirteen other associations, including the Bombay Suburban Congress Committee, paid their homage to Rajendra Babu by garlanding him and presenting him the biggest bouquets of flowers.

Tyranny of Love

If there is any such thing as tyranny of love Rajendra Babu was easily the victim of it, for his was indeed a pathetic figure, literally being pressed down under the load of flowers and garlands which had to be constantly removed from his body as they were showered on him. It, in fact, reminded one of the familiar sight in some temple on the occasion of some sacred festival when the idol or image is buried under flowers and leaves which are constantly removed by Pandas to enable the devotees to have darshan of the deity.

Scenes at Bombay

But all that one saw of the homage paid to Rajendra Babu between Kalyan and Victoria Terminus faded into insignificance before the scenes witnessed when the "special" carrying the Presidential party arrived at Boribunder. For miles-together the entire area round about Boribunder was one vast sea of human heads, men, women, and children, young and old, vying with each other in paying homage to their beloved leader and eagerly waiting to have his darshan. As soon as the "special" arrived, Mr. Nariman and Srimati Sarojini Devi were the first to enter the compartment and garland the President-elect on behalf of the Reception Committee, about five hundred members of which were present on the platform. Though weak in health and tired on account of the long journey, Rajendra Babu looked quite cheerful and as soon as he got out of the compartment the volunteer band began to play and amidst cheers he, with his wife, entered the coach and four, which had been beautifully decorated with flowers and on which were seated also Srimati Sarojini Devi and Mr. Nariman. His getting up on the coach was the signal for a tremendous effort on the part of the crowd to get near him but because of the tactful handling of the situation by

trained volunteers the cordon fortunately could not be broken.

The Procession

After a military salute, the procession started but despite all police and volunteer arrangements to regulate and control the traffic, it was nearly an hour or so before the procession left the precincts of Victoria Terminus which was decorated with Congress flags. The procession consisted of the pilot car with the G.O.C. the Congress cavalry, a long row of smart looking lady volunteers in saffron coloured saris adding tenfold to the picturesqueness, the pomp and the grandeur of the scene. Then came the Presidential carriage, guarded on all sides by volunteers and followed by a mammoth crowd, about a mile long. For more than four hours all vehicular traffic in the Fort and Girgaum area was dislocated and trams had to be discontinued till the procession reached the Congress House.

Tyranny of Love

Here again Rajendra Babu had to subject himself to the tyranny of love. For nearly four hours he had to be carried in that hot sun in an open coach and four in an atmosphere rendered almost suffocating by the vastness of the crowd. The procession went through Boribunder, Crawford Market, Sheikh Memon Street, Bhuleshwar, C.P. Tank, Girgaum, Back Road and Bambakhana.

Costly Arches

And one could have an idea of the extent of the enthusiastic reception which, they say, beat all previous records in the history of Bombay when it is said that nearly two dozen arches were erected at different places along the route, the most artistic of which was the one erected in Sheikh Memon Street by the shawl merchants wherein was displayed costly shawls, one of which is said to be priced at twenty-five hundred rupees and the costliest of arches was that made entirely of bales, thoroughly exposed to the vast crowd, and a burning matchstick or a cigarette stump, negligently thrown, would have resulted in the loss of rupees forty thousand. It is said that a similar cotton bale arch was also erected by a big cotton merchant at the time of the visit of His Majesty the King. Other arches of fruits, vegetables, flowers, silver and brass utensils and various other goods in the market were no less artistic. In short, the decorations in the Bazar area bore eloquent testimony to the love and affection which the merchants and traders, who contributed most lavishly to this part of the welcome by displaying the wares with which they made up the arches, entertain for this revered leader and tribune of the people. There were also interesting and inspiring posters hung all through the route and special devices were arranged for showering flowers and sprinkling rose-water. In fine, the reception accorded to this uncrowned king of the people was the grandest ever witnessed in Bombay.

10. Report in the Searchlight dated 26 October 1934 on the proceedings of the All India Spinners' Association and Mahatma Gandhi's clarification on certain points in regard to the organisation

Replying to the debate Mahatma Gandhi explained why he wanted to retain the words "dead and dying". The object was to see which of the industries should be saved on economic merits. They were to go to villages not as anyone's agents to exploit the masses but as Khudai Khidmatgars to serve them in all possible ways. His was not the way of the dry economist but he wanted to enter the very life of the villagers and include in his report reference to their conditions of life.

Mahatma Gandhi said he was surprised at the suggestion made by Mr. Prakasam. It did not mean that they should not receive help from Congressmen who would go to the legislatures. It would be the duty of the Congress parliamentarians to help them in all possible ways and he was confident it would be received in the ordinary course.

Explaining why he wanted the organisation to be independent of politics, Mahatma Gandhi said if he tried both things at one time he would not be able to achieve either. "I will try to serve them and the strength that will be created among them as a result of that service cannot be resisted by anyone, not even Government. We want to go to the villages to make the villages better equipped morally, physically and intellectually."

Further, Mahatma Gandhi pointed out that because the All India Spinners' Association was not associated with Congress politics it was not declared illegal. In the same way he wished this Association to be free from political control. In fact, at Karachi he wanted Anti-untouchability League and Prohibition League on similar lines but they did not agree to it. Those who opposed the idea then had admitted to him that it was a mistake.

Continuing, Mahatma Gandhi said Congress would have full share in the work of organisation but it depended on themselves what part they should play. He was certainly expecting them to play an important part. To his knowledge, all out of eleven hundred workers of the All India Spinners' Association were Congressmen. The same should be the case with this Association.

Concluding, Mahatma Gandhi replied to those who said he was opposed to the use of machines. He denied the charge and said what he wanted was not to be a slave of machines but to make the machine the slave of the villagers. The charge that he was an agent of capitalists or at least an intermediary between them and the labourers was, he said, wrong. "I am not their agent." He exploited the capitalists for the good of the labourers by getting from them money which they had made out of other people and which they gave him for doing good to the people. Mahatma Gandhi did not believe the fiscal policy of Government could thwart the country's economic development if the country knew how to go about its business.

All amendments were put and rejected and the resolution of Mahatma Gandhi was carried amidst acclamation.

11. Presidential speech by Rajendra Prasad at the 48th session of the Indian National Congress in Bombay

26th October 1934

Brothers and Sisters,

We are meeting after three years and a half of strenuous work and suffering. The country has had the misfortune of losing the guidance and mature judgement of a veteran worker like Annie Besant, whose life and work have been a source of inspiration to thousands. It has further had the misfortune of losing another veteran patriot in Sri Sankaran Nair and a valiant nationalist in Mr. Syed Hasan Imam who, 16 years ago, guided the deliberations of a special session of the Congress in this very city. The passing away of that uncompromising champion of our liberties, whether in or out of the Speaker's chair, Vithalbhai Patel leaves a gap which will be well nigh impossible to fill. To many of us, the premature death of Deshpriya Jatindramohan Sen Gupta was a personal calamity. In Mr. A. Rangaswamy Iyenger the country has lost not only a distinguished journalist but also a constitutional lawyer, whose knowledge was frequently requisitioned.

Let me also remind you of the one who is behind prison bars and who represents more than anyone else the flower of the youth of our country and whose ardent spirit is undaunted by national setbacks or domestic anxieties. To Jawaharlal Nehru our heartiest greetings and sympathy. Our thought also must go to the sturdy fighter Subhas Chandra Bose, now in a foreign land. Nor may we forget all those who, though unknown, have suffered or are still suffering for the sake of the country.

To those servants of the nation, known and unknown, who have passed away, we offer our homage.

You have called me to preside over the Congress at a very difficult and critical time. It will be natural on your part to expect me to carry on the national work till the next session of the Congress. I confess, I feel overwhelmed by the tremendous responsibility that the position carries with it. I would have been happy to be left alone to work in my own humble way in my corner of the country but the nation's call may not be disobeyed. I am here at your service. I am fully conscious of my limitations and I have sense enough to know that this signal mark of confidence is not meant as a personal tribute, but is only a token of appreciation of the little contribution that my poor Province has been able to make during the recent struggle and of the sympathy which it has been its good fortune to receive in such ample measure in its recent unprecedented calamity. It rests, however, with you to help me by your unstinted support and cooperation to carry on the difficult duties you have entrusted to me.

Coming as I do from a Province which, during the last ten months or so, has been particularly selected as the victim of Nature's wrath, I desire to convey my heartfelt thanks to the country which has shown practical sympathy with the people stricken by a phenomenal earthquake followed by huge floods. The response which has come from all quarters and from all classes of people

inhabiting this vast country and from Indians abroad and from foreigners shows conclusively that if the disaster was unprecedented in its magnitude, the sympathy and fellow-feeling it evoked was equally unparalleled. There have been disasters in the past which, though not so vast in extent, were still some of the greatest recorded in history, and yet the country was never before roused to such a pitch of active sympathy. As the national feeling has grown and pervaded the country at large, the wail of people in a corner of Northern India has resounded and re-echoed from one end to the other and drawn out not only cash but tears and personal service. As the Bihar Central Relief Committee said in one of its early statements: "Out of the great tragedy that has overwhelmed Bihar and taken its heavy toll of death and destruction and sorrow, some enduring good has come in the shape of a united nation joined together in common sorrow and common effort to overcome it, having faith in each other and forgetting the petty differences that seemed too trivial in the face of a mighty disaster."

Recent History

The Congress movement has passed through various phases during the last fifty years of its existence. One would feel tempted to take a bird's-eye view of its hope and aspirations, its weaknesses and failures, its successes and triumphs. But I would resist that temptation except in so far as its recent history may be necessary to elucidate the present and enable us to lay out a programme for the future.

It will be recalled that the last regular session of the Congress was held at Karachi in March 1931, soon after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It was much to be hoped that the Pact would open a way to permanent peace between Britain and India, but that was not to be. Now that Civil Disobedience has been suspended, it would be useless to go into a detailed examination of the circumstances which forced the hands of the Congress to re-start Civil Disobedience after Mahatma Gandhi's return from the second Round Table Conference. I would content myself by stating that at every step the object of the authors of the Pact was frustrated by the officials who were in charge of affairs and had to give effect to its provisions. Lord Irwin had retired. Lord Willingdon had come in and there was undisguised resentment in official circles at what was regarded as a surrender on the part of Lord Irwin. And the moment he was away from the scene, a complete change in the Government policy came about and preparations were set afoot to take the Congress by surprise as soon as the Round Table Conference was over. It was known that the Government could not afford, and did not intend, to accept the demands of the Congress. Events in England also proved favourable to this scheme of things. The Labour Government had resigned. A National Government with a big Conservative majority was formed and the whole policy of Lord Irwin and Mr. Wedgwood Ben was reversed. When Mahatma Gandhi returned from England, he found himself faced with a situation which seemed to have been very carefully and meticulously prepared. An excuse was found in what was wrongly described and advertised as a No-Rent Campaign in the

United Provinces, but which was really nothing more than suspension of payment pending negotiations which had been going on between the Government on the one side and the Congress leaders on the other, to secure a settlement on an equitable basis on the very serious question of remission or suspension of rent on purely economic grounds, which had become necessary on account of unprecedented economic depression. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr. Sherwani and Mr. Tandon were arrested just two days before Mahatma Gandhi's arrival and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan with some of his colleagues was made a prisoner under an old Regulation. Bengal had already been selected for special treatment and a number of most drastic Ordinances had been promulgated. They were followed by equally drastic Ordinances for the United Provinces and the Frontier. On his voyage, Mahatma Gandhi had been issuing statements offering cooperation, but on landing he came to know of the removal, by arrest and imprisonment, of valued colleagues and the promulgation of the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier, yet he offered, of behalf of the Working Committee, to intervene and, if possible, to bring about a settlement and applied to the Viceroy for an interview, which was unceremoniously rejected except under the condition that the questions relating to Bengal, the U.P. and the Frontier would not be subjects of discussion. The interview having been rejected, Mahatma Gandhi had no option but to advise the Working Committee to be prepared for the revival of Civil Disobedience. But he made a last-moment attempt and sent a second long telegram begging again for an unconditional interview, failing which, he thought it his duty to inform the Viceroy that the Working Committee would have to resort to Civil Disobedience. Reply came to this last-moment request in the form of warrants of arrest for himself, the Congress President, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and other prominent Congressmen throughout the country.

The Congress was taken unawares and Government expected that they would be able to crush the whole movement within a fortnight. In spite of want of preparation, in spite of sudden removal of all the prominent Congress workers throughout the country within a few days to prison, when they were not able to give instructions to their followers as to how to organise the campaign, it must be said to the credit of the nation that the lead, which had been given by the Working Committee, was faithfully and spontaneously followed. Thousands again courted imprisonment, lathi charge, firings, heavy fines, confiscation of property, and beatings on an extensive scale.

The movement was not crushed and went on for months and months without break to the bewilderment of officials, who had hoped to crush it in a few days. Special sessions of the Congress were held at Delhi and at Calcutta amidst arrests and lathi charges and in spite of the vigilance of the police who had concentrated upon preventing them. It is not necessary to go into details of this repression beyond stating that a bare summary of the provisions of the various Ordinances, most of which were later converted into Acts by obliging legislatures, will show how drastic they were in character and comprehensive in scope. The courts were

ousted from jurisdiction and the executive armed with large powers. The Press was muzzled. New offences were created and in some cases collective and vicarious punishments laid down. To these must be added numerous laws enacted for Bengal particularly, apparently to meet what is described as the terrorist menace, but resulting, not in a few cases, in a complete suspension of all political activities of a progressive type, lest their sponsors should incur the wrath and the penalty of the all-powerful C.I.D. Now, the Congress has never concealed its view regarding the terrorist movement. It has condemned without hesitation and in an unequivocal language all terrorist outrages, and under the great influence of Mahatma Gandhi has done all it could to create an atmosphere against the cult of terrorism. But at every step it has felt hampered by the fact that impatient enthusiasts who take to this wrong method cannot effectively be approached by public opinion on account of the stiffness of the Government attitude and its all-pervading suspicion of the motives of even those who are its supporters and helpers in this respect. Apart from other considerations, the Congress condemns terrorism because it hampers the country's freedom struggle and tends to create forces which will lead to further disruption and trouble and because it is essentially wrong and un-Indian. But these youngmen cannot be weaned from it by the equally indefensible method of unadulterated repression.

The country has been passing through a period of deep economic depression which has been intensified by the Government policy of managing Indian affairs in the interests not of India but of Great Britain. The past few years have seen great distress of the peasantry, unable to pay the heavy land revenue and rent and suffering great privations. They have witnessed curtailment of expenditure on nation-building departments, great slump in industry, export of more than 200 crores of distress gold, dislocation of trade and a tremendous increase in unemployment, the extent of which, even in the best of normal years, the British Government have never dared to ascertain owing to its vastness. These years have been remarkable for heavy additions of the already overtaxed tax-payer and the poverty-stricken population for carrying on an extravagant and top-heavy administration and partly for suppressing and crushing the movement for freedom.

The Ottawa Pact, which has been condemned with one voice by the best-informed opinion in the country as being detrimental to the best interest of India, and particularly of the masses of agriculturists, was ratified and its working has proved that the apprehensions of its critics were well-founded. It has successfully tied India to the chariot wheels of the British policy of Imperial preference.

Indians Abroad

The position of our countrymen abroad gives no ground for satisfaction. Their treatment in the colonies of the British Empire has been a long-standing cause of just grievance and has influenced not a little the change in our outlook and opinion in favour of complete independence. One after another, Indians settled

in these colonies and protectorates are being deprived of their inherent rights to which they are entitled by virtue of their long association, service and contribution to the prosperity of these colonies. They have, in fact, been instrumental in many cases in building up these colonies and many have been born in them and have their homes without any other in the world. One scheme after another is devised to get rid of them after they are no more needed, and although it is some consolation to know that the scheme of assisted repatriation has been given up, it is also to be noted that no place is found in the vast British Empire where they can live and settle with the same full rights to land and citizenship as others have in India. The latest application of this policy of squeezing out Indians is reported from Zanzibar where, in spite of the best of relations which Indians have maintained for generations with the Sultan and his subjects, Ordinances have been hurriedly passed, which deprive them of the rights of acquiring land. The discrimination against Indians becomes flagrant when we know that this restriction does not extend to the new arrivals from Arabia. There is nothing surprising in all this when we know that Indians do not enjoy even elementary rights of citizenship in their own country and which even the proposed constitutional reforms are not going to confer on them. We can only give this assurance to our countrymen abroad that as our position at home improves, their position will also automatically improve. In this connection it is impossible not to mention with gratitude the great name of Deenabandhu C.F. Andrews, who has been frequently going to Africa to render such help as has been possible for him to render.

The Dual Policy

The Government policy, which was enunciated by Lord Irwin towards the end of 1929, announcing the convening of the Round Table Conference has always had a double aspect which has been emphasised more than once by Lord Willingdon's Government. It has been claimed by the Government that this double policy, on the one hand aims at advancing constitutional reforms, and on the other seeks to suppress what the Government considers to be subversive and revolutionary movements. In pursuance of the first it is claimed that the Round Table Conference has been framed as a result of consultation with Indians and that a Joint Parliamentary Committee is considering them. These proposals are known as the White Paper. In pursuance of the second, the Government has thought it necessary to suppress the Civil Disobedience movement with a heavy hand. To Indians it seems that the second policy has not only been much more in evidence and has caused untold suffering to numberless people, but is responsible for the issuing of Ordinances and the enactment of laws which have taken away even the ordinary rights of citizenship and laid down drastic penalties and suppressed not only what may be regarded as subversive movements, but effectively prevented perfectly constitutional agitation also. The reforms side of the policy has succeeded only in feeding credulous people on hopes of something

which may not come. We have, undoubtedly, had three Round Table Conferences, Committees and Sub-Committees *ad infinitum*, and prolonged inquiry by a Joint Parliamentary Committee. It has dragged on in some form or other its interminable investigations for six or seven long years. It is yet to be seen if this long labour is going to produce anything acceptable even to the most moderate opinion in the country.

The White Paper—Four Tests

The White Paper has been condemned by almost unanimous public opinion in India as highly disappointing and unsatisfactory. And, of course, it does not in any way fulfil the requirements of the Congress which has declared for independence, meaning and including complete control over the Army, the Finances, the foreign relations and the internal administration of the country. The White Paper is nothing if it is not a negation of all these items and if it does not bar even a gradual progress towards any of them. In view of the fact that very serious efforts are being made in England to whittle down even the White Paper proposals and that even Mr. Arthur Henderson, the leader of the Labour Party, is unable to concede anything in the nature of even diluted self-determination to India, it may seem out of place for me to devote any time to its detailed criticism. But inasmuch as the White Paper proposals are the result of long and extensive consultations and are undergoing detailed examination by the Joint Parliamentary Committee and has been put forward in justification of the Government policy of advancing constitutional reforms, I take leave to point out that the proposals of the White Paper do not take us anywhere near what our moderate countrymen aim at, viz., Dominion Status, not to speak of complete independence which is the Congress goal. In fact, they take the country, in some respects, in the opposite direction and leave it in a position constitutionally worse than that now occupied under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms.

I will judge the White Paper proposals in the light of four tests, namely, (1) how far the proposed new legislature will be representative of the nation; (2) how far the powers alleged to be transferred to popular control are real in the Centre and the Provinces; (3) what the powers proposed to be transferred in regard to the finances are, and what additional burdens India will have to bear; (4) whether the new Constitution contains within itself any elements of growth and development.

Composition of Federal Legislature

It is sought to replace the bloc of officials and non-officials nominated by the Government by nominees of Indian States joining the Federation. The nominated officials and non-officials of British India cannot be said to be amenable to popular opinion but they have certainly a wider outlook and have more contact with public opinion than any nominee of the State could be. They also feel a sense of responsibility, even though it is to the British Government, and not to the people of India. Will the States have been in a way kept segregated?

The only effect of the replacement of the nominated bloc by States' nominees will be a tightening of the British control coupled with traditions of more autocratic rule and greater disregard of popular wishes than we are accustomed to in British India and which these nominees will bring with themselves. But apart from its bearing the character of a nominated bloc, it will also be a larger bloc numerically. Under the Montagu Reforms, out of 145 members of the Assembly, 40, or 27.5%, are nominated if we exclude the member for Berar who, for practical purposes, is an elected member. Under the White Paper proposals, out of a House of 375, no less than 125, or 33.3%, are nominated by the States—an increase in the nominated element of 6%. When we look at the composition of the elected element in the Federal Assembly, we find that separate electorates have not only been retained but considerably extended and the number of those generally expected to side with the British and the Governor-General considerably increased. I believe, in the place of 41 out of 104, or 39%, being returned by separate electorates under the existing Constitution, we shall have 108 out of 250, or 43%, returned by separate electorates under the White Paper scheme. Thus, there can be hardly any doubt that the White Paper Federal Assembly will be a less progressive and more autocratically inclined body than the present Assembly. It is necessary to go into the constitution of the Second Chamber which is bound to be less progressive than the popular House. In a joint session which is provided for, the nominated element will be 235 out of 636, or 37%, and a motion of no-confidence in connection with a subject relating to British India against a British Indian Minister can never secure a two-thirds majority if the States' nominees choose to maintain the Ministry.

In the Provinces the nominated bloc is done away with, but several Provinces like Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and the United Provinces are going to be saddled in its place with a Second Chamber, and if the trend of opinion, as it is developing in England, gives any indication, other Provinces are probably going to follow suit under the advice of the joint Parliamentary Committee. Whatever justification there may be for a Second Chamber in the Federal Legislature like that of the Provinces, there is no justification for the extra expenditure involved in setting up and maintaining these Second Chambers. Nor does the experience of the working of the Montford Reforms lend any support in their favour even in the Provinces which may be said to be radical or very progressive.

Powers Claimed to be Transferred

Now, no Constitution can be said to confer Self-Government or Responsible Government or Dominion Status, much less complete independence, which reserves to the Governor-General, and refuses to transfer to ministers under the control of a popular legislature, the administration of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Ecclesiastical Departments. But leaving this alone, which the White Paper frankly reserves, let us consider the Departments it professes to transfer. In regard to these also, it is clearly laid down that the Governor-General will not be

guided by the advice of ministers, if so to be guided would infringe on what are called the Reserve Departments, his special responsibilities, and, I may add, also his discretionary powers. These are couched in such general terms that there is hardly any measure which the Governor-General could not hold up or prevent, if he considered it necessary to do so, in his wisdom, which will be the final arbiter in the matter. These special responsibilities are so vague and widespread that they may be said to pervade all departments.

It is not inconceivable that the most innocent action taken by a minister not in favour with the Governor-General or the Governor—and in this respect the powers of both are identical for all practical purposes within their respective spheres—could easily be regarded as infringing upon his special responsibility in respect of one or other of the seven heads into which it is divided. The much advertised autonomy of the Provinces really gives more autonomy to the Governor than to the people or the minister and enables the Governor-General to have his orders executed in spite of the ministers, even when they may happen to deal with a matter falling within the scope of the latter if only the Governor or the Governor-General decided that it infringes on the special responsibility of the one or the other.

Special responsibilities are laid down under seven heads for the Governor-General. They are: (1) the prevention of grave menace to the peace or tranquility of India or any part thereof; (2) the safeguarding of the financial responsibility and credit of the Federation; (3) the safeguarding of the legitimate interests of minorities; (4) the securing to the members of the Public Services of any right provided for them by the Constitution Act and the safeguarding of their legitimate rights; (5) the prevention of commercial discrimination; (6) the protection of the rights of Indian States; and (7) any matter which affect the administration of any department under the direction and control of the Governor-General, the Governor-General being empowered in each case to determine whether any special responsibility is involved in any given circumstance. The same powers are given *mutatis mutandis* to the Governor in so far as they are applicable to the Provinces. The first practically takes away with one hand what it purports to give with the other; law and order though said to be transferred to the Province are thus kept quite safe within the double lock of special responsibility of the Governor-General and the Governor. The elasticity of this phrase is quite well-known in this country and I am using no language of exaggeration if I say that it is mere camouflage and a fraud to say that law and order is being transferred when the special responsibility in this respect is reserved in the wide and all-pervasive terms as is done under the White Paper proposal.

As regards the second, admittedly, the definition of this responsibility is drawn in wide terms and enables the Governor-General to step in whenever any proposal of the Minister regarding budgeting or borrowing is considered by him as prejudicing or endangering India's credit in the money market of the world. Past experience has shown that financial stability and credit of India are

synonymous with British profit at the expense of India, and British interests have been served so often and so brazen-facedly in the name of India's stability and credit that no Indian is likely to be deceived by words which connote more than their ordinary dictionary meaning. The entire currency and exchange policy of the Government is said to be dictated by these considerations and we know it to our cost how a stroke of the pen or an apparently innocent notification of the Government has the effect of transferring crores from the hands of Indians to those of the British without the former realising it.

The third will, of course, come very handy in turning many an awkward corner. Our Muslim brethren and others who are in a minority are apt to run away with the idea that the British Government is reserving special responsibility to safeguard their interests. Really speaking, if there is anything more calculated than another to keep all the communities warring with each other, it is this. Besides, it is a delusion to think that the safeguards are devised to serve any of the Indian minorities. They will find in actual working that after all, in all matters of moment, it is not they who are meant but the small microscopic minority of those birds of passage who come from thousands of miles and make hay while the sun shines and then disappear in the evening of their days to enjoy the fruits in their native land again.

The fourth destroyed whatever is yet left of autonomy. We shall indeed be masters in our own house without having the power to order our servants about, to whom we shall be bound to pay their unbearably high salaries, guarantee their pensions and leaves and promotion, and what not. It will be easy enough for these so-called Civil Servants to set at naught not only the policy, decisions and orders of their so-called superiors, the ministers, but to create deadlocks which will be set down to the discredit of Indians who will be branded as incompetent and inexperienced ministers to whom it was a mistake, it will be said, to transfer powers.

In the name of preventing commercial discrimination against the British, it is really ensured that the Indian should be discriminated against in the future as he has been in the past. It must be the experience of all businessmen who have anything to do with the Government, and they cannot move an inch without coming across the Government in some form or another, how at every step they have to face situations which a Britisher there has not to face. Go to the coal-fields. They will tell you how difficult it is for an Indian colliery-owner to get a railway siding to his colliery, how difficult it is for him to get wagons, and how the Indian is everyday discriminated against in practice. I am not mentioning how it has been possible for a few British concerns to get leases of practically the whole area with the best seams of coal and how Indians have to be content with second and third class collieries, and even these they get with difficulty. I am not forgetting that colliery lands are largely owned by Indians. We know how these are managed, specially when the owner happens to be a ward of court. The manipulation of railway freights offers an easy handle. When I was looking after the affairs of the All India Spinners' Association in my Province, I calculated

some years ago that the cost of transport of cotton from Sewan in the district of Saran, where cotton is largely grown, to Madhubani in the district of Darbhanga where we produce our best and the largest quantity of Khadi, both the districts being within the same division of Tirhut under a Commissioner, was the same as that of transporting cotton from Bombay to Japan and bringing back the cloth made of that cotton to Bombay. I do not know if there has been a change in this respect recently. Similarly, I was told that the cost of transporting coal from South Africa to Indian cotton mills was the same as that of transporting it from the coalfields of Bihar to the same mills. I am mentioning these few illustrations, and they can be multiplied to show how in the past the whole policy of the Government of India has been regulated with an eye not to the benefit of Indians but of foreigners, and if by any chance any minister has the temerity to try to be just, he will at once be held up as discriminating against the Britisher, and the Governor-General or the Governor will have no difficulty in invoking his special responsibility for perpetuating the injustice.

As regards the Indian States, we have already had illustrations how activities of their subjects in favour of constitutional reforms can be throttled and the special responsibility of the Governor-General or the Governor in this respect will be used for preventing the virus of democracy from spreading into these States.

So much for special responsibilities. The discriminatory powers of the Governor-General and the Governors are of a most drastic kind. Under the existing Constitution, the Governor has the power of certification and veto, but, under the proposal embodied in the White Paper, he can also send message to the legislature not to proceed with a certain measure of legislation, as also to pass certain others, or that a particular measure must be passed by a particular date and in the event of the legislature refusing or failing to obey his command, it will become a Governor-General's or Governor's Act which will have the force of an Act of legislature without having the odium attached to the name of "Ordinance" and without the letters of a limited duration, which an Ordinance has. These proposals place India under a virtual dictatorship. Mr. Churchill described the position admirably in another context:

The Viceroy or Governor-General was armed with all the powers of a Hitler or a Mussolini. By a stroke of pen, he could scatter the Constitution and decree any law to be passed or martial law, which was no law at all. Of all these he was the sole judge. Such a functionary was a dictator and he had a very powerful army.

All this power is given not only to the Governor-General but even to Provincial Governors who are, for the first time, to be invested with powers to pass Ordinances and Governors' Acts and all other powers within their spheres which the Governor-General possesses in respect of the country as a whole.

The White Paper proposals further take away certain powers which are now possessed by the Assembly, in however attenuated a form they may be. Thus, a

discussion of the Railway Budget used to furnish an opportunity for the ventilation of grievances in connection with railway administration. Railways could now be discussed and voted upon by the Central Legislature, but the creation of the proposed statutory railway authority would have the effect of precluding the future Government and Legislature from making any effective criticism of any matter transferred to the statutory authority. That this is not a negligible matter is apparent from the fact that the Railways have some Rs.800 crores invested in them and are very largely national concern already and where they are not so, they are soon passing into the hands of the States.

Finance

When we come to consider the question of finance, the illusory nature of the so-called reforms becomes still more apparent. It has been calculated that 80% of the Central revenue in the Central Government will be eaten up by Army expenditure, debt service, guaranteed pay, pensions and allowances, which will be outside the vote of the assembly, and the remaining 20% with which alone the minister, supposed to be responsible to the Legislature, could play, would be subject to a vote of the Upper Chamber which could bring it before a joint session of both Chambers for final determination. Further, if the Governor-General regards the demand for grants by the minister under any head inadequate for the discharge of his special responsibility, he may include any additional amount which he regards necessary for the discharge of such special responsibility, and the legislature will not be at liberty to vote on the same. Thus it is apparent that the control of the ministry over the public purse is practically nil in the Centre.

Considering the proposals from the point of view of the burden they impose on the country, it has been said on high authority that the introduction of Provincial Autonomy will involve an annual expenditure of Rs. $6\frac{1}{2}$ to 8 crores and that of responsibility in the Centre another Rs.2 crores every year. In a country which is admittedly the poorest in the world, where the cost of administration is top-heavy and certainly out of all proportion to the per capita income of the population under it, any addition to the already unbearable burden cannot but be regarded with the greatest misgiving, and no responsible person can easily reconcile himself to this additional burden as a price for reforms so illusory, so retrograde, and so calculated to perpetuate and tighten the stranglehold on the country.

Future in the Air

There is no provision for any automatic growth or development in the Constitution. Everything does and will continue to depend on the sweet will and pleasure of the British Parliament. There is no pretence at self-determination and even the Federation, which is to come after fulfilment of so many conditions precedent, can come only after a second vote of the Houses of Parliament.

And what is this Federation? It is a kind of federation which has no parallel in history. In it the rulers of one-third of India will be called to counteract through

their nominees the progressive elected elements of the remaining two-thirds. There is absolutely no mutuality in any respect: the princes' nominees will have equal rights with the elected representatives of British India to interfere with the administration of British India without British Indian representatives having any the least voice in the administration of the States, which will continue their autocratic rule without so much as even declaring or guaranteeing the elementary, fundamental rights of citizenship, which are, or rather ought to be, the basis and foundation of any allegiance which the people may be required to bear to the State. In other words, it will be a kind of federation in which unabashed autocracy will sit entrenched in one-third of India and step in every now and then to strangle popular will in the remaining two-thirds. But the princes themselves will be more helpless than they are now and will soon realise the effect of a federation which is conceived to keep them free from the baneful interference of British India people, but none the less subservient to the Viceroy.

Suspension of Civil Disobedience: Council Programme

I have thus far discussed the dual policy of the Government. I come now to our own policies and plans. Events have, somehow, so happened that since the breach of the truce in 1932, we have had to steer our course clear of Government policies. The suspension of the Civil Disobedience movement was declared not with reference to any declaration of policy by Government, but with reference to the peculiar moral and spiritual character of our struggle.

I will not go into the events that led up to the historic Patna decision of May 1934—how Gandhiji successfully challenged from jail the Communal Award of the Premier which had threatened to vivisect the Hindu community in twin, how Gandhiji intensified the movement for the abolition of untouchability and his epic fast as part of it, and his release, the Poona Conference, and how as a result of things he had heard and seen during the great Harijan tour he came to recommend to the A.I.C.C. suspension of the Civil Disobedience and confining it to himself. Let the country study the course of events in the statements Gandhiji had issued from time to time.

Some of the factors, which must have weighed with Gandhiji when he recommended suspension of Civil Disobedience as a mass movement could not have escaped the notice of even casual observers. Two weaknesses seem to me to have dogged our footsteps.

Firstly, the Congress workers had been gradually and perhaps unconsciously led into adoption of methods of secrecy, which reduced what would have been an open battle of defiance into a battle of wits. It was not realised that Satyagraha is essentially a fight on a higher moral plane in which suffering is openly courted and cheerfully borne and which aims at conquering the opponent by an appeal to his moral sense and in which any attempt to overreach him rebounds with fatal effect on the Satyagrahi himself.

Secondly, it must also be admitted that the attack of the Government on a vulnerable point succeeded. People were not prepared to lose property to the

extent they were prepared to lose liberty and even life, and when heavy fines and confiscations started on a wholesale scale, gradually demoralisation set in and ultimately broke the backbone of the movement. An attempt was made to continue the struggle by confining it to those individuals who had faith in it, taking it out of the methods of secrecy. That partly explains the Poona and Patna decisions.

It has had to be suspended in the very interests of the movement and those of the country. The principal reason was our own weakness, and yet I do not feel that there is any reason to be down-hearted. Our object is nothing less than the liberation of the vast country which is as big as a continent, with its varied population of many castes and creeds and speaking different languages. The response which the country has made from one end to the other to the call of the Congress has been splendid and we have reason to be proud of it. Because our object is great and the task difficult and tremendous, we have to consider our own shortcomings and defects of the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee, and certain announcements which Mahatma Gandhi has made have been subjected to very searching criticism. The value and importance of these resolutions and the statements of Mahatmaji consist in the fact that they have brought in the forefront of discussion certain fundamental considerations. The first statement which Mahatmaji issued from Patna on the 7th April last, simultaneously with his correspondence with Dr. Ansari, announced his advice to the Congress and Congressmen to suspend Civil Disobedience except with regard to himself, and to those who believed in entry into legislature, to take up the programme of Council Entry. Both these items were considered at great length at the meeting of the All India Congress Committee at Patna in the following May and were endorsed by it. The Council Entry programme naturally led to the creation of the Congress Parliamentary Board which has been entrusted with the work of organising, guiding, and controlling propaganda in favour of election of Congressmen to the Assembly for the time being. Now, today we are in the midst of a campaign which has led to the formulation of the Congress policy in the legislatures in regard to the White Paper and the Government policy of ruthless repression on which all parties in it are agreed but also, unfortunately, on what has been called the communal decision of the British Government on which all are not agreed. It will be recalled that after the second Round Table Conference, the British Government announced its decision settling, from its point of view, the question of communal representations in the legislatures under the reforms constitution. The decision was given because the Indian members of the Round Table Conference were unable to arrive at an agreed settlement of the outstanding differences on the constitutional question amongst the various communities in India. It has created the unfortunate position that whilst we are unable to agree among ourselves, it is also impossible to accept this decision which is anti-national in many respects and is calculated to retard the progress of the country towards a common national outlook. On the other hand it cannot be denied that some of the minorities, particularly the

Musalmans, are opposed to rejecting it or think in the main it safeguards their interests. The Working Committee had, therefore, to decide the question on which a large section of Hindus and Sikhs are on the one side and practically all Musalmans, with a few leading exceptions, and perhaps members of some other minority communities, are on the other, the former favouring the unqualified rejection of the decision and the latter equally strongly favouring its acceptance, until it was replaced by an agreed settlement. Under the circumstances, the Working Committee had no other alternative but to point out the unsatisfactory and anti-national nature of the decision hoping at the same time to be able in course of time to replace it by an agreed settlement, and to that end not to divert the attention of the country by creating an agitation in favour of either accepting or rejecting it.

Mahatmaji's Statement

But events have marched quickly during the past few weeks. Mahatma Gandhi has just made two statements of far-reaching importance, in which he has recorded his reading of the history of the past fifteen years, placed his finger unerringly on the secret places of our heart and given us a warning for the future. Not even his worst critics have challenged his analysis and some have even glossed over the situation in an 'I told you so' spirit. It will be best for us and for our country if, even at the end of these fifteen years of our struggle, we realise the true situation. The first statement was in the nature of a challenge and a feeler, the second is the result of the country's reaction to the first. In the first he declared the things that he holds dearer than life itself—truth and non-violence and Khadi, reform and revolution through conversion and not compulsion—and said, as one section of the country was running away from these articles of faith and as the other was giving no effect to the allegiance to them which it professed from year to year, there was nothing for him but to retire from the Congress. In the second statement he declares his conviction that his retirement is inescapable, but as he retires in order to be of more service to the Congress and the country than heretofore, he has also suggested a reform in the constitution which alone can save the Congress from disruption.

Now that leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Dr. Ansari and the Khan brothers have given their hearty assent to the correctness of Gandhiji's decision, I do not think it necessary for me to take up your time discussing the pros and cons of the question of his retirement. I should certainly have done so if my own mind ran counter to the opinions of these colleagues, but I am steadied as soon as I remind myself that his decision proceeds out of the depth of his devotion to truth and non-violence and it must spur us on to further effort towards those ideals.

But though Mahatmaji has made up his mind not to seek the vote of the Congress on things that make up the warp and woof of his life, I would ask you not to dismiss those things without a thought, and would urge you to realise their implications and to give them some place at least in your programme and your policies. Though I do not claim to have the same living and active faith as

Mahatma Gandhi in those things that he has taught some of us at least to hold dear, I must declare my creed and my conviction about them.

Congress Creed

About the amendment in the creed, I would ask you only one question. Have we really understood by "peaceful and legitimate" anything but "truthful and non-violent" all these years? Has the world outside understood our creed differently? All the credit that we can take today and all the discredit that critics and our self-introspecting hearts pour upon us spring from the fact that we have kept that lofty creed as our ideal. The world should cease to watch our fight with interest if our creed meant anything less than it has meant all these years. Whatever the failure of our civil resistance to civilise our rulers, there is no gainsaying the fact that there should have been much more unashamed brutality than we have been the victims of, if there had not been this great creed proclaimed by us.

I next come to the yarn franchise and the much discussed khadi clause. I may say without being guilty of national vanity that there is no other flag in the world which expresses in itself purer and loftier ideals. It rules out in one sweep the three-fold curse of modern humanity, viz., imperialism, capitalism and industrialism. The spinning wheel and khadi are not only the living link between the classes and the masses, they are symbols of the country's determination to resist all forms of exploitation by non-violent means. They represent an era of purification of politics and private life. Remove the khadi clause and you will snap the living link between the cities and the villages.

To my mind, Truth, Non-violence, and Khadi represent a triple force whereby we can achieve the whole of the Karachi programme and more. There is a section of our countrymen who, without having achieved even what we pledged ourselves to do at Karachi, insist on crying for more. Whilst I would have no objection to amplifying the Karachi programme and elucidating it wherever there may be any fear of misunderstanding. I would say emphatically that we should do nothing that compromises by one iota the creed of non-violence. Whatever may be our failures, we have made rapid strides. Let us not by our impatience undo the work of the last fifteen years. My friends, the Socialists, are keen on a more inspiring ideology and would hasten the elimination of all that stands for exploitation. I should like to tell them in all humility but with all the force at my command that there is no greater ideology than is expressed by the creed of truth and non-violence and the determination of the country not to eliminate the men that stand for exploitation but the forces that do so. Our quarrel is with the sin and not the sinner, which we all are to a greater or lesser degree. Compulsion will react on us with redoubled force; conversion, however slow it may seem, will be the shortest cut and will mean a new contribution to history and civilisation.

Reform of Constitution

Having said this, I would say a word about the reform in the constitution that

Mahatmaji has suggested in his second statement. He recommends that the size of the Congress should be considerably curtailed and the representation in the Congress should reflect its hold on the country as a whole. It has been suggested that to make the Congress an efficient deliberative body, the number of delegates should be reduced from 6,000 to 1,000 and each delegate should be regarded as, in fact he is, a representative of the members on the Congress roll, and give to those places and Provinces proportionally larger representation in the Congress, that will have more members on their rolls and that have been more active in carrying out the Congress programme. Whether they, the members, represent the whole nation or not will depend upon the quantity and quality of service they render. The Congress influence and hold over the people have never depended upon the number on the actual register but they depend upon what it stands for—the sacrifice that the members have made for achieving the goal.

In conclusion, I would say that in considering Mahatmaji's statements you should remove from your minds any apprehension that you may have that he is going to retire from public life or that, by not being physically connected with Congress, his interest will cease or that his help will not be available. I have no such apprehension. I am sure his separation is intended to strengthen and help us, and not in any way to weaken or hinder us. I feel that Mahatmaji outside the Congress which does not wholeheartedly accept his programme will be more helpful to the country and the Congress than Mahatma Gandhi inside the Congress with the drag of a big unbelieving majority at his back. I do not, therefore, feel any shock over his impending separation. I do not minimise the effect of such a decision, if he comes to it, but I wish you to have faith in him and I have no doubt that all will be right, whether he decides to work from within or from outside the Congress.

CONCLUSION

Let us start with a clean slate on the work in front of us. The need of the hour is not for bigger or more inspiring programme, but for the determination to achieve what little we may have set before ourselves. The task is immense. There is today a greater determination on the part of the rulers not to part with power, as they have succeeded in creating disruption in our ranks. The Ordinance rule of the past four years indicates the extent to which the Government can go to suppress the movement for freedom, even though it may be probably non-violent. Bengal and N.W. Frontier have been raped, seemingly beyond repair. It is difficult to breathe free in the one, and it is impossible to understand the situation in the other. There have been deplorable acts of terrorism in Bengal, but unmanning the whole youth of vast areas is not the way to fight it. The N.W. Frontier Province, which has had a severe spell of repression, which the brave Pathans led by that selfless and patriotic servant Abdul Ghaffar Khan have borne with exemplary restraint, is forbidden ground for him and for his brother. There is constructive work enough and to spare, to occupy the time and energies of those

who care for it. The resolution on cent per cent Swadeshi that Mahatmaji has embodied in his second statement is a vital one. If the infatuation with high-sounding slogans has not blinded our reasons, we should see that Khadi with cent per cent Swadeshi is enough to take us to our goal of complete independence which, in Mahatmaji's language, "is an impossible dream without the higher classes merging themselves in those millions who are miscalled lower classes"

Council Entry Programme

There is, lastly, council programme. The All India Congress Committee has decided to contest elections to the Legislative Assembly, so that the country might pronounce its verdict on the White Paper and the repressive policy of the Government. I hope that the electors will show by unmistakable action that the Congress possesses their full confidence. Let us not, however, be led away by the idea that Swaraj can be achieved by anything we could do in the legislatures. We have to remember that the price for freedom must be paid before we can get it and while we have every reason to be proud of what has been done and what the country has suffered, it is after all, yet, inadequate for the great object we have in view. The task we have taken upon ourselves is great and glorious. It requires inexhaustible patience, unflinching determination and unending sacrifice. Time and world forces are helping us and, above all, God is with us in this great epic struggle of an unarmed people fighting with the weapons of Satyagraha, Truth and Non-violence, a most powerful Government armed *cap-à-pie* and equipped with latest engines of destruction devised by science and human ingenuity. For us there is no turning back. The goal is clear. It is nothing short of independence.

Meaning of Independence

Independence is the natural outcome of all that the freedom movement in India has stood for. It cannot mean isolation, particularly when we remember that it has to be achieved by non-violence. It means the end of exploitation of one country by another and of one part of the population of the same country by another part. It contemplates a free and friendly association with other nations for the mutual benefit of all. It forebodes evil to none; not even to those exploiting us, except in so far as they rely upon exploitation rather than goodwill. The sanction behind this independence movement is non-violence which in its positive and dynamic aspect is goodwill of, and for, all. We already see signs of how it has begun appealing, to a certain extent, to world opinion. This appeal has to become irresistible. It can do so according as the element of distrust and suspicion, which has its birth in fear, is eliminated and replaced by a sense of security born out of confidence in the goodwill of India. India having no designs on others, will not then need a large army either for its protection against foreigners or for internal peace which will stand guaranteed by the goodwill of its inhabitants. Having no designs on others, she will be able to claim immunity from the evil designs of others, and her safety will be buttressed and protected by the goodwill of the world at large. Conceived in this light, our independence

ought not to frighten even the British unless they aim at perpetuating the present unnatural conditions.

The method, too, is crystal clear. It is active, dynamic, non-violent mass action. We may fail once; we may fail twice; but we are bound to succeed some day. Many have already lost their lives and all. Many more have sacrificed themselves in their struggle for freedom. Let us not be deterred by the difficulties which confront us nor diverted from our straight course by fear or favour. Our weapons are unique and the world is watching the progress of the great experiment with interest and high expectation. Let us be true to our creed and firm in our determination. Satyagraha, in its active application, may meet with temporary setbacks but it knows no defeat. It is itself a great victory, for as James Lowell put it:

Truth for ever on the scaffold,
Wrong for ever on the throne,
Yet that scaffold sways the future
And behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow,
Keeping watch above His own.

12. Address delivered by K.F. Nariman as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the 48th Congress at Bombay

28 October 1934

On behalf of the Reception Committee of the 48th session of the Indian National Congress and on behalf of the citizens of Bombay I offer you a most cordial and hearty welcome to this commercial capital of India and this centre of Congress politics. Nearly 16 years have passed since Bombay had the honour of holding a special session of the Indian National Congress and all these years have been years of strenuous activity and steady advance in the field of politics. It is, indeed, a noteworthy coincidence that when the Congress met in 1918 it was to discuss and record the nation's verdict on the scheme of constitutional reforms which the British Cabinet were anxious to introduce into India. Only the previous year the historic pledge about Self-Government had been given and Mr. Montagu had come to India on a special deputation. On the basis of the report that he submitted a Bill was drawn up, embodying recommendations intending to give Indians a larger share in their own Government.

'Purna Swaraj'—the Ideal

The representatives of the nation, who had assembled then rejected the reforms as disappointing, inadequate, and unsatisfactory. Despite the opposition of the nation, the reforms Bill was passed but it failed to bring peace in

India, which the British statesmen had fondly hoped for. The Act that was then passed contained a provision that more reforms would be granted after a lapse of 10 years and, in accordance with that provision, an unending procession of Commissions and Committees have been coming to this country and making reports and recommendations. As if to supplement them, there were three more big gatherings glorified under the name of Round Table Conference and as a result of the combined labours of all these conclaves of statesmen and diplomats there has emerged a new scheme of reforms which is today on the legislative anvil. The need has arisen today again for the nation to stand up as one man and reject every attempt of the imperialists to forge tighter links to bind India to the chariot wheels of the Empire. And Bombay is legitimately proud that the delegates of the nation are today assembled to reiterate their determination to be free to review their allegiance to the ideal of "Purna Swaraj".

Role of Bihar

It is another noteworthy coincidence that three Bombay sessions of the Congress should have been presided over by three illustrious sons of Bihar. Lord Sinha presided over the 1915 session and Syed Hasan Imam guided the destiny of the nation in 1928. Now, we have the good fortune of meeting under the chairmanship of Babu Rajendra Prasad, the foremost leader of Bihar, a peasant in his garment but a prince among public workers. The unanimous vote by which he has been elected to guide the destiny of the nation during the coming year is a testimony to the esteem and affection in which his countrymen from one end to another hold him. In his own Province the name of Rajendra Babu is a name to conjure with. The call to national leadership has come to him in the midst of a trying time. His own Province has been recently rent by a paroxysm of Nature causing the most widespread havoc. His own family has suffered shocking bereavements. And he himself is the victim of a nerve racking illness which, with every little exertion, becomes more malignant. If in the midst of these ordeals he has cheerfully responded to the nation's call and taken his place of responsibility, it is only an indication of his unbending devotion to duty and his utter readiness to shoulder every burden in the cause of India's freedom.

Government and Civil Disobedience Prisoners

The fact that the Government have not yet released all Civil Disobedience prisoners, although nearly 6 months have elapsed since the suspension of Satyagraha, also gives an insight into the inner working of the minds of the authorities. They would not let even Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru join us in this assembly today. They would not let him attend even on his ailing wife without imposing irritating little-minded time limits. Heavy is the cross the intrepid Pandit has been called upon to bear, but his is a valiant heart which no power on earth can crush. The sufferings which a resentful bureaucracy heaps upon him only serve to shed additional lustre on his radiant personality. May his wife be soon restored to health and he to freedom.

Need for Relief

While on the question of the Government's treatment of Satyagrahis, let me refer to the result of repression in the various Provinces and stress the need for organised relief. In Karnataka, Gujarat and the United Provinces the peasants and farmers have suffered immensely and the Congress will be failing in its duty if it does not give the necessary succour to those who, in responding to its call, have lost their all. The sufferings of Khudai Khidmatgars is unexampled and they too call for relief and help.

Obstruction to Congress Session

While the great gods at Simla have been racking their brains to keep isolated all the Congress forces, the 'Chota' gods at Bombay have been doing their bit in heaping impediments in the way of holding the Congress session. Our application for the temporary use, even on payment of rent, of the vast and open unused tract of reclaimed vacant land near Church Gate was turned down. That area was certainly more convenient, being nearer the commercial centre and possessed of better facilities for transport and other amenities than this distant outskirt of the city. Though, so far as the actual results are concerned, this could not have, and has not, made any difference, because thousands of patriotic and enthusiastic Indians would always cheerfully undertake this annual political pilgrimage even though the sessions be held either on top of the freezing Himalayas or at the scorching land's end of Cape Comorin, but this insolent rejection of our request by the Government, though insignificant and unimportant by itself, still demonstrates tragically our helplessness, impotence and dependence in our own country. That a large tract of vacant and unused piece of land, reclaimed at the cost of millions of rate payers' money, cannot be made available for admittedly the greatest, the most representative, and the most popular political organisation in the country for a few days, to hold its annual plenary session, is a position neither edifying nor adding to our national self-respect, particularly when we are made to feel the additional galling fact that any favourable spot in any part of the country should be at the disposal of officials and their aristocratic friends for their light sports and even harmful gambling games. I am sure this helpless condition will awaken the country to the sad reality of our situation.

Municipal Cooperation

As contrasted with the obstructive attitude of the Government, the Reception Committee acknowledges gratefully the cooperation and prompt assistance received from all officials of the Bombay Municipality, including the Improvement Trust; and the facilities for transport afforded by the Bombay Electric Supply and Tramways Co. helped considerably to reduce the hardship and inconvenience caused by this unreasonable rejection by the Government.

Fixing of Dates of the Session

Criticism has been levelled in regard to the fixing of dates of the session. Some friends believe that this particular time of the year selected for such an important session is very unsuitable. The month of October is climatically the worst part of the year making both long journeys and camp life uncomfortable. Some time after the dates were fixed, a request came from certain quarters for postponement of the session to a date after the Assembly elections, because they believed that this session would interfere with their election campaign. There is, no doubt, a good deal of force in both these arguments; but I would submit for your consideration the more weighty reasons that induced the Working Committee to fix these particular dates in spite of some inconvenience to certain friends; those of you who attended the Patna A.I.C.C. meeting remember that on the resolution for formation of Parliamentary Board, a constitutional objection was raised from a strong and considerable section of Congressmen that in view of the Lahore resolution boycotting the legislatures, the Council Entry programme could only be sanctioned by another plenary session of the Congress; hence it was necessary to arrange for an open session shortly before the Assembly election, so that the resolution might be endorsed by this session, and the Lahore ban against the Council Entry could thus be formally and legally removed.

At a later date, when further request came for postponement after the dates of Assembly elections were actually fixed, additional weighty reasons prevailed to adhere to these original dates and these requests could not be granted. In view of the difference of opinion on the Working Committee resolution on Communal Award, it is but fair that an opportunity should be given to all parties, including dissentients, to place their point of view before the session and obtain a final verdict. Pandit Malaviyaji and Sri Aney had openly declared their intentions to continue their endeavours in this direction till the last, that is till this plenary session, to get the Working Committee resolution rescinded. Therefore, it was necessary and fair that an early opportunity should be given to them, before the Assembly elections were completed, to have their point of view ventilated and placed before this highest authority in the Congress constitution; otherwise, the Cabinet might have been charged with attempting to evade that issue and not giving an opportunity of facing it in the open session. It is hoped and expected that Panditji, having openly sought and invited the verdict and justly claimed the right of audience from this open session, will, as a rigid disciplinarian, and one of the oldest Congressmen, abide by its mandate.

These were some of the main considerations that prevailed in fixing these dates.

Besides, I believe that this huge, mass political gathering is bound to create a great additional demonstrative and propagandist effect, not only in this city and presidency, but all over the country, and the fact that the Council Entry proposal has obtained the sanction of this plenary session will by itself have a great propagandist value and is bound to have greater effect on all Congress-minded

electorate in all parts of the country, than any individual or group electioneering campaign; thus, far from hindering the election work, this early session will certainly help the Congress candidates, and I have no doubt that the country will readily and willingly respond to the Congress call and give its whole-hearted support to Congress candidates. I wish them all success.

Parliamentary Board

In advancing these arguments I have taken for granted that this session will endorse the Patna resolution on the formation of the Parliamentary Board. So long as Mahatmaji's blessings to this new Parliamentary venture continue, there is no chance or risk of its being successfully challenged from any Congress quarters.

Council Entry

It might be contended that it would be inopportune at this stage on the eve of the elections to reopen the question of Council Entry. It would indeed be so if the principle of Council Entry was still an issue in dispute. But today it is an accepted plank in the Congress platform. And no one could think of tearing it out. And so it would only be in the fitness of things if the programme of the party is so amended as to make it a revolutionary force.

Such suggestions and amendments as to the details of the programme and policy and even in the manifesto would, I respectfully submit, be perfectly legitimate and within the province of every loyal Congressman, because that would be in pursuance of, and consistent with, the Patna decision.

Immediate Political Issue

Coming to the immediate political issue which the Congress will be called upon to tackle, we must first take into consideration the change in the Government's attitude between 1933 and 1934. As soon as it was realised that the unlawful Congress had ceased to be aggressive, Whitehall and Simla grew more and more boastful. At the commencement of the struggle all they wanted was only that the Congress should drop 'Direct Action' and that if it did so the reconstruction of Indian politics would be proceeded with on the basis of maximum agreement. The Congress knew the assertion was incorrect. That was why it fought. When the fight was on, the Loyalists, the Liberals and the Constitutional Nationalists and Independents all found fault with the Congress for carrying on a war in the face of such a clear declaration. Today the war is not there. Is the work of political reconstruction going on the basis of the maximum agreement? Is not the Congress, by common consent, and by hostile testimony, the greatest political institution carrying with it the maximum popular support? Is not the new Constitution being hatched by ignoring and alienating this institution with the maximum popular support? The English statesman knows his proclamations and professions are false, but he has to make them for other reasons than he will care to confess. When our Liberals and Moderates knew these proclamations

and professions to be false, have they also to support them for other reasons than they will care to admit? Perhaps they have. They have been the willing and enthusiastic dupes of the Government's dual policy of repression and reforms.

Congress and Communalism

To those who charge the Congress with communalist tendencies, I offer my own instance as a living, forceful, and convincing refutation of that baseless charge. Though I am a member of the smallest community in the country, still, purely by strength of non-communal votes I have always topped the polls not only in Congress election but also in the election to the Corporation and the Council. The fact that I have been elected Chairman of the Reception Committee is a complete vindication of the Congress position. Again, although the offices in the Committee are distributed purely according to merit, without reference to major or minor communities, there is a Mahomedan General Secretary in entire charge of the whole Nagar arrangements. The Office of the G.O.C., a position of great responsibility and trust, is entrusted by unanimous choice to another nationalist member of the same community. In the same way, Vice-Chairmanships and other offices and memberships of various sub-committees are found to be distributed among the various communities and even sects. Such recent examples are indeed encouraging and ought to inspire confidence in us all, that this problem is capable of a satisfactory solution by us provided we act in a proper national spirit and do not allow any outside agency to meddle with our domestic affairs.

Gandhiji's Retirement

Overshadowing the political questions that will come up for discussion before you is the situation created by Gandhiji's decision to retire from active Congress leadership. The announcement has come as a shock to the entire country. It is a matter of some consolation that he has postponed the final withdrawal till after the present session had met. I am sure I am expressing the views and sentiments of all of you present here as well as the citizens of Bombay when I tender to him our grateful thanks for the consideration he has displayed to the feelings of numerous friends, colleagues and followers. The statements that he has issued and the course of action that he has chalked out for himself demonstrate the magnanimity and the utter selflessness of this noble soul and his undoubted democratic conviction. Both with a view to avoid the sense of oppression which his towering personality imposes on colleagues and workers and also to find relief for himself from a similar feeling, he has, after due deliberation, decided upon this course. His main object in taking this step would appear to be to encourage fearless thinking and independent judgment in Congress circles.

He realises that the intelligentsia have grown highly critical of his policy and programme but are feeling helpless to chalk out a definite line for themselves. As an excuse for this helplessness they were pleading the strength of his individual personality and the hold he had over the mass mind. His voluntary withdrawal is

meant to remove all embarrassment to his followers. His critics will be given a fair field. The period of retirement will be to him a period of personal purification and a preparation for a mightier endeavour.

The Congress will no doubt miss the vigour of his inspiration and the masses will miss the light to which they had eagerly learnt to look all these 15 years. But behind all this fear lies the certain hope that all such withdrawal could only be temporary. With an ideal pitched by freedom, with a life dedicated to service, Gandhiji cannot, in any accepted sense of the word, retire. Inside or outside the Congress, he will be the living challenge to all oppression and tyranny and the guiding star to every votary of freedom.

13. *An article by Sachchidananda Sinha in the Hindustan Review on Rajendra Prasad*

RAJENDRA PRASAD, THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT: A STUDY IN CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY

"It does not lie in his great accomplishments, his wonderful ability and his extraordinary eloquence, though all these things do demand our admiration. But the people understand him. They know that he has profound sympathy with them, that he has nothing at heart but duty to promote those interests, according to his judges rightly or wrongly, about this question or that, and, of course, all of us are liable to error, and none pretend to infallibility, they know that he is a man actuated by the purest motives, and that he presents the highest example of public integrity."

The above words, uttered on a very memorable occasion by a great Lord High Chancellor of Britain, in connection with the greatest British statesman, namely, by Viscount Selborne with reference to William Ewart Gladstone, can be applied with singular appropriateness to Rajendra Prasad's character and public activities by those who, like the present writer, may claim the privilege of having known him intimately for years in various spheres of his life, and not merely as a non-cooperating Congressman. And, so, an attempt is made to paint him as he is—"warts and all"—for I feel that in painting him the truest, I shall praise him most.

II

Rajendra Prasad was born on the 3rd December 1884, about a year before the Indian National Congress was founded. He comes of a highly respectable Kayastha family, settled in the Saran District, in North Bihar. His father, Munshi Mahadeo Sahay, was a landlord. Rajendra was the fifth and the youngest child of his parents. An elder sister, the only other child of his parents, is still alive. Only a few months back he had the dire misfortune of losing his elder

brother, Mahendra Prasad, who was just like a father to him, and whose loss he feels, therefore, as irreparable. Mahendra Prasad was a highly respected public worker, and placed to his credit a splendid record of very useful public activities in the cooperative movement, banking and business. It was he who took the keenest interest in the education and the upbringing of Rajendra Prasad after their father's death in 1907—and to whom the latter owes much of his success, in the various spheres of his life, as a public man.

When Rajendra went to school, at Chapra, in 1893, Bihar and Bengal were still united as the "Lower Provinces" and it was, therefore, a great achievement for him to have topped the list at the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in March 1902. He was the first Beharee student to have achieved so notable a distinction, and naturally it evoked great enthusiasm in Bihar. In noticing his success, the *Hindustan Review* wrote with an almost prophetic prescience as follows: "Young Rajendra is a brilliant student, by all accounts. We hope he will sustain, in his University career, the high standard of his success in the Entrance examination. We wonder what the future has in store for him. Given good health, nothing open to Indians should be beyond his aspirations. We hope he will live to occupy a seat on the Bench of the High Court of his Province, and receive the letter of appointment as did Mr. Justice Chandavarkar, at Lahore—when presiding over a session of the National Congress." What better prediction could then be made than what has practically come about in the fullness of time, except that the prophecy about the judgeship has been frustrated by the non-cooperation movement?

Rajendra then joined the Presidency College, Calcutta. At the Intermediate Examination, he again stood first in the University. For the third time he stood first at the B.A. Examination, in 1906. He then joined the M.A. class, in English, as well as the Law class, in 1906, but was unable to take his B.L. degree until 1910, though he took his M.A. degree in 1907. This ended his academic career and he left Calcutta to take up a professorship at the Greer College, at Muzaffarpur, where he worked for nearly a year. He returned to Calcutta towards the end of 1909 to be articled to a senior lawyer, with a view to be able to practise in the High Court.

While a student Rajendra was never a bookworm. Even in his college days he used to take a leading part in such intellectual activities as debates and discussions. As a university student he took the initiative, in 1902, in starting the Beharee Club in order to provide a meeting place for the Beharees, in Calcutta, and to help Beharee students in the matter of their accommodation on their arrival in India's the then metropolis. This institution was in a truly real sense the forerunner of the Beharee Students' Conference. By the time he had graduated in 1906, he had become passionately interested in political work. Those were stirring times. So that when the anti-Partition and Swadeshi agitation was started, the Beharee students in Calcutta also felt its impact, and Rajendra Prasad threw himself heart and soul into it, with the result that his studies suffered, and he could not render as good an account of himself at the M.A.

require any special equipment of comfort. What I shall get from the Society will be enough for me. But I cannot flatter myself that it means no sacrifice on your part. You, who have been forming high hopes, will see your hopes dashed down in a moment. But in this transitory world all passes away—wealth, rank, honour. The wealthier you become, the more you require and although people may think that they are satisfied with gold, those who know anything know very well that happiness comes not from without, but from within. A poor man with his few rupees is more contented than the rich man with his millions. Let us then not despise poverty. The greatest men of the world have been the poorest, at first the most persecuted and the most despised. But the scoffers and the persecutors are gone into dust, no more to rise, no more to be heard of, while the persecuted and the despised live in the memory and the hearts of millions. If I have had any ambition in my life it has been to be of some service to the Mother. What prince or commoner is there who has the influence, the position or the honour of a Gokhale? And is he not, after all, a poor man?"

Thus wrote, nearly a quarter of a century back, the youthful Rajendra words which he would repeat today even more emphatically as a man of fifty. It is this innate spirit of self-sacrifice and selflessness that has enabled him to achieve what many others, far more intellectual than him, have failed to do. In 1934, as in 1910, he lives a life of utmost simplicity. A rigid vegetarian and (of course) a strict teetotaller, his life is one of greatest simplicity—plain food, plain clothes and plain living all round. In spite of a frail health, embarrassed with chronic asthma, subjected to many privations and hardships as the result of his close association with the Civil Disobedience movement, Rajendra Prasad stands out in Indian public life today as a pathetic figure of great force and moral grandeur, and a towering personality amongst those who may justly claim to have dedicated themselves to the cause of the country as their sole and life-long avocation. The number of such true and genuine patriots, and absolutely selfless workers, is very small, indeed, at present, in this country; in fact, they may be counted at one's finger's ends. But there can be no doubt that in that very small group, Rajendra Prasad justly occupies a position in the front rank.

IV

Rajendra Prasad joined the Calcutta High Court in 1911, and continued to practise therein till March 1916 when there was established the new High Court at Patna. In Calcutta he enjoyed a fairly good practice, and was recognised as a rising junior. In 1915, he had appeared at the M.L. Examination, and secured a first-class first. As soon as he started his career in the Patna High Court, he got into a large and lucrative practice, and came to be held in very great esteem not only by a growing clientele, but also by the judges and his colleagues. In fact, no junior of his standing in the profession was more sought after—alike by seniors and clients—than was he. It goes without saying that had he continued to

practicc, he would have been undoubtedly appointed, in the fullness of time, to the Bench of the Patna High Court, and possibly the prediction of the *Hindustan Review* would have been fulfilled to the letter, by his receiving the offer of an appointment to the Bench while presiding over a session of the National Congress, assuming, of course, that that organisation had adhered to its old moorings as a purely constitutional movement. But things have fallen out differently, as they were destined to do in the changed circumstances of the country.

Soon after his having started practice at Patna, Rajendra Prasad's indefatigable energy became manifest in connection with the popular opposition to the very reactionary Patna University Bill, which had been introduced in the Imperial Legislative Council in September 1916 by the late Sir Sankaran Nair, the then Education Member. Rajendra Prasad was then the Joint Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Association. With great determination and courage he carried on, in cooperation with his colleagues, a vigorous propaganda in the Press and on the platform, and had the satisfaction of seeing the Bill substantially improved before it was enacted. When the Patna University came into existence, in the year 1917, he found himself appointed to the Senate, and was later elected to the Syndicate. He was an enthusiastic worker, as a senator, in the cause of cheaper education, of a shorter university course, and of the recognition of Hindi and the other provincial vernaculars, as the media of instruction in schools. He was successful in getting the University to adopt some of his proposals, and would have probably succeeded in others also in the not distant future, if the non-cooperation movement had not intervened to make him cut off his connection with the University. He was held in great esteem by his colleagues, official as well as non-official, and his absence from the Senate was long felt as a very great loss by them. Though depriving himself thereby of the prospect of being appointed a Vice-Chancellor of the Patna University, he occupied later a similar position at the Bihar Vidyapith—the nationalist University at Patna—which existed for some years till it was closed down due to Government having taken possession of its building, in the course of the measures adopted to combat the Civil Disobedience movement.

V

The event which made history in Bihar at that time has come to be known as the Champaran affair. When Mahatma Gandhi visited Bihar in April 1917 to make an inquiry into the grievances of the Champaran ryots, he was arrested and prosecuted, but subsequently released. Rajendra Prasad joined him to offer voluntary service, and remained there with him all through. When the Bihar Government realised the gravity of the situation, owing to the unprecedented enthusiasm and popular response which this inquiry had evoked, it appointed an official committee, with Gandhiji himself as a member of it, to investigate the whole matter. This Committee found in favour of the ryots, with the result that

the Champaran Agrarian Act of 1918 was passed by the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council removing most of their grievances, including the compulsory growing of indigo by them. This was Rajendra Prasad's first association with Gandhiji in a popular demonstration, which left its impress upon his future life. But until the happening of the Punjab disturbances in April 1919 and the tremendous excitement it brought in its train, Rajendra Prasad continued to work on the old constitutional lines, and appeared in the cold season of 1918-19 as a witness, at Patna, before the Franchise and the Division of Functions Committees, on behalf of the Bihar Provincial Association. When the agitation against the Rowlatt Act was started in 1919, Rajendra Prasad signed the pledge to break "unrighteous" laws and worked vigorously to organise the movement in Bihar. Things had by then begun to move fast in the country. Martial Law was soon declared in the Punjab, the late General Dyer had done his 'mighty' deed in the Jallianwala Bagh; Indian Muslims had felt outraged at the prospect of the dismemberment of Turkey by the victorious allies, and the political temperature had shot up high throughout the country. In 1920 at a Khilafat meeting, held at Patna, Rajendra Prasad made a stirring speech and declared that if the special session of the Calcutta Congress, to be held in September of that year, accepted the non-cooperation programme of Mahatma Gandhi, he would throw in his lot with it. True to his word, he suspended his extensive and lucrative practice, and resigned from the University Senate even before the Nagpur Congress (of December 1920) had confirmed the resolution on non-cooperation, passed in the previous Calcutta session. Ever since then he has been the one great leader of the Congress movement in Bihar, and one of the greatest in India, of direct action, non-cooperation, civil disobedience, and passive resistance. Even after he had undergone much loss and suffering, he contributed to the *Hindustan Review*, in 1929, two brilliant articles, bubbling over with enthusiasm, headed "Back to Non-cooperation: Our Only Slogan", the concluding words of which were as follows: "Let our slogan, therefore, be: 'Back to non-cooperation' for that alone will bring India to her destined goal." And though he is today, from a sense of discipline, backing Congress candidates for election to the Assembly, it may safely be said that in his heart of hearts he is not a believer in capturing the legislatures but in capturing the country through the momentum of non-cooperation and civil disobedience. The General Secretary of the Congress and a member of the Working Committee for years, he was elected to preside, in 1932, over the abortive Puri Session of the Congress, abortive because the Congress was not allowed to be held and Rajendra Prasad himself was in jail at that time. He had already undergone imprisonment for civil disobedience three times—the first two sentences extending only for six months each, but the third one to a period of no less than fifteen months.

VI

Rajendra Prasad was still in jail when on the 15th of January last there

occurred that great cataclysm of Nature—the tremendous earthquake in Bihar. As soon as he was released, two days later, he threw himself heart and soul into the great work of organising relief for the thousands of his stricken fellow-beings, and he is still daily, nightly, and hourly at it. Many have helped him, and cheerfully cooperated with him, in this gigantic task, but it is he and he alone who has been bravely shouldering the burden from the moment of his release, after completing his third sentence of fifteen months' imprisonment in defence of his idea of freedom for India. Unaided by any adventitious forces, or fortuitous circumstances, he has been able to raise, as if by the magician's wand, a sum of over twenty-eight lakhs of rupees for the Bihar relief, nearly half of the amount raised in response to the call of the Viceroy of India, with all his great influence, vast resources and tremendous prestige. This crowning achievement alone would entitle Rajendra Prasad to a place in the front rank of the great Indians who, in the twentieth century, have served Mother India with a devotion worthy of appreciation and admiration.

Nor is Rajendra Prasad, very fortunately, of that not unfamiliar type of public worker in the India of today who believes, and wants all others to believe, that he and those of his school of thought, can alone work wonders in all spheres of public activities. Broad-minded to a degree, catholic in the best sense of the term, modest in a remarkable measure, and willing to receive assistance from all desirous to help him, Rajendra Prasad has managed to secure, in the discharge of his arduous duties as the President of the Bihar Relief Committee, the fullest cooperation of the representatives of all schools and of all shades of political thought, which redounds as much to his credit as to theirs.

VII

It would be easy to cover a larger canvas with a delineation of Rajendra Prasad's saintly character and lovable personality, but I advisedly forbear from attempting it. I have tried to show that though Rajendra Prasad is a leading figure in that section of Indian nationalists which believes in the efficacy of direct action, as opposed to constitutionalism, he is nevertheless great not so much because of it, as in spite of his being identified with the tenets and activities of a particular party. The mere partyman in the India of today—whether a constitutionalist or a direct-actionist—is bound to be, in the present political condition of the country, more or less dangerous to the cause of progress, by reason of his narrow-minded intolerance, audacious pugnacity and truculent demeanour, even if he not be obsessed with an almost fanatical perversity, and a supreme contempt for all who do not see eye to eye with him, because of his close association with a doctrinaire empiricism. Such persons—even when most intellectual or patriotic—are more a source of great hindrance to India's progress towards economic and political freedom, because by the over-emphasis of the particular shade of thought they have developed, their mental horizon becomes cribbed, cabined and confined, and their vision becomes limited. It is to

the highest credit of Rajendra Prasad that in spite of his closest association, for now nearly fifteen years, with the new school of political thought, as represented by the non-cooperation Congress, he has not at all allowed his vision to be clouded, his judgement to be warped, and his sympathy to be confined to any one particular group only. It may be that sometimes party forces and influences have proved too strong even for him, that very occasionally he has failed to assert himself, or to rise to the full height of his stature, for setting right wrongs which needed to be rectified, and that on rare occasions he might even have been found wanting, judged from the standpoint of carping critics and cavilling fault-finders. If so, I shall leave it to them to pick holes in the character and activities of one who has never claimed to be an angel, or a transcendental being—a superman. But while it would be foolish to claim infallibility for any public worker, Rajendra Prasad, beyond all doubt, offers us a glorious example of one who alike in his public activities and private relations is “actuated by the purest motives” and “presents the highest example of public integrity”. Thus it is, as Mathew Arnold sings, that

To see things in their beauty
Is to see them in their truth.

14. *An article on the Bombay Congress by Kalinath Ray, Editor of the Tribune*

THE BOMBAY CONGRESS CRITICALLY SURVEYED

In reviewing the last session of the Congress, held at Bombay, I shall depart from the traditional method of describing the event as a success or a failure. There are two reasons for this. One is that this method has already been followed almost to perfection, not only by news agencies and special correspondents of newspapers, but by some among the Congress leaders themselves. The other is that success and failure are not only relative but deceptive terms. The same event that is a great success, from one point of view, may be a conspicuous failure from another. Similarly, an event which appears at first sight to be an unqualified success may in the end prove to have had the seed of decay in it. In all such matters it is the part of wisdom to remit judgement to posterity who alone can judge in the light of actual experience what contemporaries can decide only by forecast.

II

The first thing that must strike a dispassionate observer with regard to the Bombay session is that it marks the termination of one epoch and the commencement of another. For fourteen years, the Mahatma and his ideals and methods had dominated the Congress. There was a brief period during these fourteen years when other ideals and methods and other men, as representing

those ideals and methods, seemed to be in the ascendant, but in the main the Mahatma was still the dominant figure. Now the Mahatma has gone out of the Congress, and while going out of it he has apparently also taken away all that he specifically brought with him into the Congress. The Mahatma's chief outward contributions to the Congress were non-cooperation, civil disobedience, charkha and khaddar, anti-untouchability, and making the Congress a mass movement. With the return of the Congress to the legislatures, the last trace of the old non-cooperation programme has practically disappeared. Civil disobedience, though nominally suspended, has, in reality, been abandoned, at least for the time being. Khaddar has been relegated to a secondary place, and the habitual wearing of khaddar, instead of being compulsory in the case of all Congressmen, has now been made compulsory only in the case of a select few in the Congress. The same is the case with the spinning franchise. In point of fact, spinning and khaddar have now become the concern of a virtually independent body, the All-India Spinners' Association. Anti-untouchability has similarly been taken charge of by an independent organisation. Lastly, with the reduction in the number of delegates from 6,000 to 2,000, the creation of an autonomous organisation for the promotion of village industries, and the transfer of the function of holding Congress exhibitions to the All-India Spinners' Association and the new Village Association, the Congress will cease to be a mass movement in the sense in which it has been once during the last fourteen years. The net effect of these changes undoubtedly is that the Congress will once again become a predominatingly political organisation.

Yet it will be a profound mistake to imagine that this means the obliteration of the past fourteen years from the life of the Congress, and a return to the pre-Gandhi era in the history of that body. Such obliteration and such return would be both unnatural and contrary to all experience. Fourteen years is not a small space in the life of a nation, and it would be a sad confession of failure not only for the Congress but for the entire Indian nation, if the Congress were today forced to go back upon all that it has achieved, during this fairly long period of time. More than that. History itself would not be the organic unity it is, if a large slice like this could be taken out of it without affecting its character or its purpose. What has happened in this case is what happens in all such cases, and it cannot be expressed better or more accurately than in dialectical terms. The Congress before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi was the thesis; the Congress under the Mahatma's direct leadership was the antithesis; the Congress as it is going to be now is the synthesis. The outward resemblance of the Congress of today, to the Congress in 1919, is no more than the outward resemblance which the synthesis always bears to the thesis. In the one case, as in the other, what looked at one time to be a homogeneous life divided itself in accordance with its own inner law into opposing elements. For a time, the elements thus opposed to each other fought for ascendancy vigorously and desperately. And now they stand reconciled to each other in a higher and deeper unity. This unity which is all the better and richer for the experience gained during the period of struggle and

antagonism, which, in fact, has literally grown out of that struggle and antagonism even as that struggle and antagonism itself grew out of the pre-existing harmony, is not for a moment to be confused with the simple and undifferentiated unity which preceded the antagonism.

Let me descend from philosophy to facts. The Mahatma has gone out of the Congress, and yet he remains the master of Congress. He is still the idol of the average Congressman, the leader of leaders. While acquiescing in his decision to retire from the Congress, the Congress reiterated its confidence in his leadership. In a word, the Mahatma, if he will not be in the Congress, will still be of it, its supreme inspirer, guide and exemplar. His ideals still remain the ideals of the Congress, and his methods still remain its methods, though the exclusive and excessive stress laid on them during the period of the struggle has now naturally disappeared. Spinning, khaddar and anti-untouchability are still there, though they stand differentiated from the purely political side of the work of the Congress, and the organisations which are specially entrusted with the duty of carrying them out will still be under the aegis of the Congress, viewed as India's national parliament. The same is the case with the new village organisation, which will take charge of the great work of rural reconstruction and uplift. Lastly, while neither non-cooperation, nor civil disobedience, figures in the actual programme of the Congress, the Congress continues to be permeated by the spirit of non-cooperation and civil resistance. Those who are going to the legislatures in the name of the Congress are not going there to cooperate with it all the more effectively. Civil resistance to individual laws is being given up, so that the whole atmosphere of the country may be surcharged with the spirit of resistance and of moral revolt against national subjection, whether in the political or economic sphere, or in what is really far deeper and more important, the sphere of ideas. Not the stoutest advocate of the Gandhian gospel on the one hand, nor the stoutest advocate of bureaucratic absolutism and self-sufficiency on the other, will deny that to a man the Congress today, as representing political India, stands for India's complete national freedom; nor will either of them deny that the determination to achieve this freedom is more intense and more voluminous both in the Congress and in the country than it ever was in the past, not excepting even the spacious days of non-cooperation. And all this is not only a sequel to the struggle which the Congress has waged during the last fourteen years under the leadership of the Mahatma, but is the direct outcome of that struggle. The truth, of which this is an individual expression, is finely stated by Goethe in his famous lines about the picture of change which modern science has set before us:

In the floods of life, in the storm of deeds,
 Up and down I fly,
 Hither, thither weave,
 From birth to grave,
 An endless welf,

A changing sea
Of glowing life
There in the whistling loom of time I ply,
Weaving the living robe of Deity.

III

The second outstanding event of the Bombay session of the Congress was the adoption of a new constitution. Before I express my opinion regarding this constitution, there are two words to be said about its author. In the first place, it is a striking commentary upon the Mahatma's retirement from the Congress that he should have poured forth his whole soul into the work of persuading the Congress to adopt this constitution. "If I began by giving you the existing constitution", he said, in the course of his great speech in the Subjects Committee, "I am also tendering you a humble gift in the shape of the amended constitution, so that you may have the benefit of the judgment and experience of one who has endeavoured to live that constitution in the closest communion with you and discovered its defects." Again: "I am giving you an iron constitution from which not one single man or woman can go away." These words, and the actual conduct of the Mahatma, are a conclusive refutation of the charge that the Mahatma was leaving the Congress either in a huff or in disgust. Secondly, in this as in so many other matters, the Mahatma, in his own words, is learning by experience. Only three years ago the Mahatma in his speech on the proposed constitution of the legislatures at the Round Table Conference held up the present constitution of the Congress as almost a model and exemplar to the official legislatures in India. "We have something analogous to the central legislature in the All-India Congress Committee", he said. "We have also provincial bodies analogous to the provincial legislatures"; and he made it quite clear that in his opinion both were working not only smoothly but admirably.

How radically the Mahatma has now altered his views is perfectly clear from his speech in the Subjects Committee. "We are indirectly representatives of the nation's dumb millions", he said. "We are their mouthpiece, their voice and their thought. But directly we are representatives only of the electors. Can anyone among us say whom he represents and whether he is in living touch with his constituents and knows their feelings? Even the tallest among us cannot claim that. Vallabhbhai is the uncrowned king of Gujarat, but which electorate does he represent? Whom do I represent? I do not know. I challenge anyone to produce the Congress register of electors. We must have constituencies and electors, and each member must represent his constituency and be in living touch with it." Here in these words we have as strong a condemnation of the previous constitution as one can think of, and this condemnation is due not merely to the fact that the constitution has not in all cases been honestly worked, but to its inherent defects.

Turning to the new constitution itself, the first thing that occurs to a

dispassionate critic is that the system of indirect election for which the Mahatma seemed to express his preference at the Round Table Conference has now completely disappeared. Each one of the members delegated to the Congress will be elected not through an elaborate system of indirect election such as exists now, but by primary voters, whose number is not to be less than 500 and may be much larger. It will not do to say that the present preference for direct election is due to the fact that the number of primary votes on the Congress register is very much less than the number on the electoral rolls of the official legislatures. The number was not very much larger in 1921, and, in any case, the preference for direct election is subject to no caveat.

The second noticeable feature of the constitution is a substantial reduction in the number of delegates. The present Congress never was, and was never intended to be, anything but a spectacular show. The official life of the delegates is only three days in the year, and their chief function is to register the decrees of the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee. With the number reduced to 2,000 the position would undoubtedly be better, though a deliberative body of 2,000 delegates does not exist anywhere else in the world and can hardly perform its functions in a businesslike manner.

The third important feature of the constitution is the provision for the election of the President by the delegates themselves, instead of by the Reception Committee, on the recommendation of the Provincial Congress Committees. This is a legacy handed down from a time when the Congress was at the farthest possible distance from being a democratic body. The Provincial Congress Committees, as at present constituted, are obviously far too narrow an electorate for the election of the supreme head, the chief executive officer of the Congress, and the concurrent jurisdiction given to the Reception Committee, whose sole business should be to make arrangements for holding the annual session, is a manifest absurdity. Next to the primary voters, through some sort of an electoral machinery such as exists in the United States, the delegates to the Congress are the only body that can be entrusted with the duty of electing the President. The election of the All India Congress Committee of the same body, and a reduction in its number are another and equally commendable feature of the new constitution. Here again the Mahatma's original plan has been drastically revised. He wanted the number of delegates to be 1,000, and he wanted the Congress itself to become the All India Congress Committee for the year. Under the revised scheme the maximum number of delegates has been raised from 1,000 to 2,000, and the maximum strength of the All India Congress Committee has been reduced from 1,000 to 166, the Committee being an elective body with one member for 12 delegates.

There is not the smallest doubt that this constitution will be a vast improvement on the previous one. The only important point on which I dissent from the revised scheme is as regards the maximum number of delegates. If the idea is that the Congress should be a deliberative, business-like body, and if it is intended that the delegates should be in office during the whole year and should

meet as often as the occasion requires, clearly a membership of one thousand is the outside limit. Besides, the giving of the right of electing a delegate to so small a number of voters as 500 detracts materially from the representative character of the Congress. As the Mahatma himself pointed out, the average constituency for the election of membership is so very much cheaper than the membership of the official legislature. But when all this has been said, the fact remains that the adoption of this iron constitution is a decisive landmark in the history of the Congress.

IV

It is obvious that the true test of the genuineness of the two great changes, which the character and constitution of the Congress has undergone, will be the actual extent to which the Congress becomes representative of those sections of India's intelligentsia which were shut out of the Congress by the policy and programme that was in the ascendant in it during the last fifteen years. It is perfectly true that the liberal secession had taken place before the Congress passed under the leadership of the Mahatma. It was due more to the determination of the liberals to work the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms for what they were worth than to any other cause. Non-cooperation itself, as a settled policy, did not appear on the scene before the Special Congress of 1920, and it was only at the Nagpur session that it consolidated its influence. By that time the split was an accomplished fact. But if non-cooperation cannot be held responsible for the split, it was certainly responsible in no small measure for keeping it alive. The enthusiasm of the liberal members brought forward a resolution in favour of materially accelerating the pace of the Reforms. The cold shoulder which the Government gave to that resolution, the "Steel Frame" speech of Mr. Lloyd George which went directly and fundamentally against what the liberals had persuaded themselves to believe was the spirit of the Reforms, and the manner in which the Reforms were actually worked by the Government of India and the Secretary of State, by the heads of the Provincial Governments and by the permanent Civil Service, brought about a complete disillusionment among the more progressive section of the liberal party as well as in the whole of the independent section of the nationalist party. This process of disillusionment, aided by other factors, particularly Time spirit, and the growing assimilation of the ideas of these sections of opinion to those of the Congress, created a situation when, if non-cooperation and civil disobedience had not stood in the way, it is perfectly certain that many of them would have gladly returned to the Congress fold. Not only the prestige, influence and authority, but the actual resources of the Congress were such that no one could possibly like to remain outside that organisation if he felt that he could have an honourable and self-respecting place in it.

Of course, the fault did not lie on one side. If Congressmen were too much under the influence of some one-sided ideas, the liberals and independent nationalists

themselves could not easily shake themselves free from the habits of a lifetime. Most of them believed almost exclusively in the old-world methods of petitioning, prayer and the registering of protest in the Press and at public meetings, and found it difficult to reconcile themselves to the new spirit of national self-help and self-assertion which was abroad in the country, and which the Congress was naturally the chosen abode. Only on one occasion in recent years did the liberals, as a body, rise above their traditional narrowness of outlook, and join the rest of India in resisting the decree of the ruling authority. Significantly enough that was also the only occasion, if we leave aside the Gandhi-Irwin pact, which had a peculiar history, when the national resistance proved an unqualified success. There is no other case on record, since the unsettling of the partition of Bengal, when the nation was able, by sheer self-assertion, to get the decree of the British Government and the British Parliament revoked. The Simon Commission was successfully boycotted; its reports became a dead letter as soon as they were presented and published and the October (1929) announcement, speedily followed by the first Round Table Conference, heralded the dawn of a new policy.

One might have thought that the lesson of that great achievement would have sunk into the hearts of both parties and that henceforth they would try, as far as possible, to work with a common purpose and follow a common programme and policy. But this was not to be. With the departure of the Simon Commission the forces of disunion were again in the ascendant; and though, for a brief period, liberal leaders cooperated with Pandit Motilal Nehru's Committee, common action has been conspicuously lacking ever since. The two Round Table Conferences, instead of bringing them nearer, widened their differences. But the darkest cloud has its silver lining, and if the first two conferences widened the breach between the Congress and the liberals, the third conference which was a grave departure from the character and constitution of its predecessors, the publication of the White Paper proposals and the long-drawn-out proceedings of the Joint Select Committee have again brought the more patriotic and more self-respecting section of the liberals and independents mentally nearer to the Congress. The language in which several non-Congress nationalist leaders have condemned many of the reactionary proposals contained in the White Paper is just as strong as that employed by the Congress President himself for the purpose. In fact, there is little in Babu Rajendra Prasad's incisive speech which was not anticipated by independent nationalist and liberal critics of the White Paper.

The present, therefore, is a unique opportunity for both parties to close the ranks. The only conceivable obstacles in the path of their reunion have now disappeared. Civil Disobedience has been given up. There is no trace of the old non-cooperation programme and policy left in the Congress. Congressmen are going to the Legislature, not to come out of it on the slightest provocation, but to stay there. The original proposals about the spinning franchise and the khaddar clause have been abandoned. The Mahatma has removed the paralysing

weight of his personality from the Congress. Lastly, and above all, the Congress has again become a political organisation. If the old obstacles had continued to exist, all talk of reunion would have been outside the range of practical politics. But outwardly at any rate they have all been eliminated, and now if only the Congress leaders will extend their right hand of fellowship to the liberals and others, there is nothing to prevent their re-entering the Congress. Of course, the spinning and khaddar franchise for the office-bearers and members of certain election committees is still there, but this is a remnant of past idolatry which, we have not the smallest doubt, will in due course disappear, all the more speedily if new forces enter the Congress. It may be said that the duty in this case is reciprocal. The liberals themselves should make an approach to the Congress, just as the Congress should make an approach to them. That is perfectly true, but the Congress, the country's principal political organisation, must make that first move. Only by doing so can it convince India, and the world, that it has once again become a political organisation conducting itself on political lines, and aspiring to unite the whole of politically self-conscious India in the mighty task of fighting for India's freedom.

V

The last feature of the Congress, on which I should like to say a word, belongs to a different category. If there was so much in its proceedings of which the Congress could be justly proud, in one essential matter, the Communal Award, the attitude of the Congress was wholly anti-national and the overwhelming majority of its delegates gave proof of their continued slave mentality. Had the Working Committee, or the various speakers who supported its resolution either in the Subjects Committee, or at the open session, advanced even a shred of real argument in support of the Working Committee's resolution, I could have understood and even appreciated the attitude of this majority. As a matter of fact, they repeated, parrot-like, the entirely fallacious reasoning of the Working Committee and Mahatma Gandhi's unvarying formula that there was no occasion for the Working Committee to revise its decision. Where they did anything more than this they only indulged in meaningless and utterly irrelevant platitudes about maintaining the strength, solidarity and authority of the Congress at any cost, and about the supposed heinousness of Pandit Malaviya's creating a split in the Congress. The patent fact was entirely overlooked by them that the split was created by the Working Committee itself. Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Aney only gave organised and effective shape to the forces of antagonism which the Working Committee had roused by its action. It was open to them to organise those forces outside the Congress, but loyalty to the Congress and that healthy spirit of national unity, which is an entirely different thing from either barren or mechanical identity, or dull lifeless uniformity, made them set their faces against any such idea and resolved to form their party within the Congress. The first would have meant disintegration and dissolution. The course actually

taken by them means greater and closer reunion, and yet so extremely slavish was a part of the majority—happily only a small part—that it actually fell foul of Pandit Malaviya and disgraced itself by abusing and vilifying him.

Regarding the resolution itself, it is wholly unnecessary to add to what I said in my article in a recent number of the *Hindustan Review*. No attempt has yet been made in any quarter to meet a single one of the arguments of Pandit Malaviya and Mr. Aney, and of all others who have been alienated by the Working Committee's decision. For the present, I shall only draw attention to the glaring self-contradiction in which the Working Committee involved itself in its long-winded resolution. In one part of the resolution the Committee said that "the Congress is pledged to reject any resolution which is not agreed to by any of the principal communities". In another part, and that immediately preceding this one, it said that "in view of the division of [opinion in] the country, the Congress could neither accept nor reject the Award". In one case the existence of a sharp division of opinion was put forward as a conclusive reason why the Congress must reject the resolution. In the other it was on account of the existence of this very division of opinion that the Congress, in the opinion of the Committee, could neither accept nor reject the Award. Can anyone think of a more utterly illogical, inconsistent or absurd position than what the Working Committee thus made itself responsible for? And yet it did not, in the least, affect its position with the slavish majority. The proceedings of the Subjects Committee, and the Congress in this matter, are the most emphatic illustration of the truth of the Mahatma's statement that the Congress has lost its freedom and has become an artificial organisation. It is simply a gramophone of the Mahatma. I can only hope now that the paralysing weight of the Mahatma's personality and influence has been partially lifted from the Congress, it will, to some extent at least, recover its lost initiative.

15. Inaugural Address by Rajendra Prasad at the Exhibition of Khadi and products of other village industries in Bombay on 27 December 1935

It is a matter for gratification to me that under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee, the All-India Spinners' Association and the All-India Village Industries Association have organised this Exhibition of khadi and products of other village industries. In a big industrial city like Bombay and at a place from where you can see the smoke of giant chimneys all around rising into the skies, it requires some courage to organise an exhibition of handspun and handwoven cloth and other goods produced by the human hand. But we must remember that India is a country of villages having something like 7 to 8 lakhs of them. For such a big country, the big cities can almost be counted on one's fingers. About 90 per cent of the total population of the country lives in villages and no less than 80 per cent of it is

dependent on agriculture for subsistence. In any scheme of economic improvement of the masses of this vast population, we cannot afford to ignore or neglect these factors. The programme for the revival of hand-spinning and hand-weaving and other village industries is based on a recognition of these fundamental facts and on an appreciation of the other no less fundamental fact of the grinding poverty of our masses, which stares us in the face wherever we go and which makes itself felt in a high death rate of our population, in terrible infant mortality, in the spread of many preventible diseases, in the prevalence of diseases due to malnutrition and in a general deterioration in the physique of the people at large.

The causes of this poverty are many and our economists, writers and patriots have been exercising their intellectual acumen, giving their assiduous labour on research and doing practical work to soften and mitigate the rigours of this devastating poverty. I have no time to go into these causes in detail here except mentioning some of them. We have an ever-increasing population that is dependent on agriculture alone. In the very nature of things the land that is available for agriculture in this country cannot be increased indefinitely and we have almost reached the limit of expansion. The very nature which limits the land is ever adding to the population and thus the land which had to support one person, say, fifty or sixty years ago, has now to support at least two persons today.

The burden on the land in the shape of rents and taxes and revenue is ever increasing. Every revision of revenue or assessment almost invariably results in an enhancement, and even cataclysmic falls in prices like those witnessed during the last few years do not bring about a reduction or at any rate an adequate corresponding reduction in the burden on the land.

So long as the present top-heavy and otherwise highly and ruinously expensive system of administration continues in the country and has to depend for a considerable portion of its revenues on the land revenue, no reduction in that burden is possible. The Government have to find the money for running the administration and the expenses of that administration have increased several-fold within the last fifty years. Not only have salaries, pensions and other allowances per head been considerably enhanced but hands employed have been increased. To take a few outstanding instances, the expenses on the Army, since the Congress came into existence, have increased more than threefold and in spite of recent reductions are about thrice what they were, say, after 1857, when the Crown took over India from the East India Company. The number of Provinces has increased and is going on increasing. For example, the Province of Bengal, some thirty years ago, was administered by one Lieutenant-Governor single handed without any Executive Councillors and without Ministers. Today, we have the three Provinces of Assam, Bengal, and Bihar and Orissa, and very shortly we shall have a fourth separate Province of Orissa. Where one Lt.-Governor ruled we shall have four Governors aided by about twenty Executive Councillors and Ministers with all their subordinate staff and paraphernalia. Even

districts are in the process of being subdivided with necessary additional expenditure. The new Constitution, which is being thrust down our throats, is going to cost some 8 to 10 crores of rupees extra per year. How can we hope in these circumstances for any reduction in the burden on the tax-payer?

The so-called national debt and the drain from the country are immensely greater than what used to be, say, fifty years ago.

In so far as these factors contribute to our poverty they are and will continue to be beyond our control so long as India does not come to her own and does not become mistress in her own house, able to fashion her life and cut down her expenditure according to her own desire.

But it is not that we are poor only because we have perforce to spend more on administration than formerly or than we would like to spend. Our poverty is no less—if not more—due to our forced unemployment and inability to produce what we should, or can. When the British and other foreigners came to India we had flourishing village industries and these made India prosperous. Today most of these industries are either dead or dying. Many of them have been killed. A country, depending only on tilling the soil, can hardly be ever prosperous. Agricultural work does not require all the time of the agriculturist throughout the year. Even in Provinces where most intensive agriculture is done I do not think it takes more than 180 days of the agriculturist in a year; in other places it takes considerably less and I believe I am not wrong in taking an average of 140 days in the year as the normal occupation of the busy cultivator who has enough land and other facilities to keep him engaged. But these 140 days are so spread over practically the whole year that he cannot leave the village for any length of time and go to a distant factory for even seasonal work. The natural result is unemployment for more than six months in the year, in the absence of any supplementary industry which can be established without much capital and carried on in the village without requiring the worker to migrate to a distant place and in which even the off-hours of a day may be utilised. Our old village industries were of such a nature, and thus enabled the time that is now wasted in their absence to be utilised and converted into wealth.

We have no idea of this tremendous unemployment. The British Government, with all its resources, has not even once dared to get even an approximate estimate of it during the last 175 years of its rule. As against this we have the spectacle of Governments in other countries making the reduction of unemployment as the first item in their programmes and in some countries like England providing for insurance against unemployment. Ministries are formed and broken on this single issue of unemployment in the West and the Far East. How can we expect a vast country like India with its incalculable unemployment to be anything but the prey of most grinding and soul-killing and body-killing poverty?

In the measure we are able to reduce this unemployment, we shall be able to reduce that poverty; and it is as a potent means of reducing this unemployment that we turn to the revival of these village industries. About a hundred years ago,

numberless men and women were engaged in spinning yarn and weaving cloth. What has become of those spinners and weavers? Have we given them any substitute for the work which they were doing and which they have lost? The answer can only be in the negative. Till recently I have seen numberless men and women engaged in this season in pounding and husking rice. Many were employed in grinding wheat and corn. The by-products like the outer shell of the paddy, the powder which is got when the rice is polished and the coarser bran of the wheat and corn are all being used in some form or other. The outer shell makes very good fire during winter; the powder and bran are used as human food or fodder for cattle. All this work has in some places passed out of the hands of the villager to mills and factories and in most places is just in the process of being transferred. No substitute has been found for those rendered thus unemployed in the villages. Only some ten to fifteen years ago I used to see in villages round about the village in which I was born, numberless small sugar-making establishments. Every village had a number of small cane-crushers which were worked by bullocks and men. The cultivators themselves used to cultivate and grow the cane, crush it in their crushers and convert the juice into gur or jaggery in pans, the fuel required being found out of the dry leaves and the coarser stalk of the cane left after the juice had been extracted, the green leaves and the finer portion of the stalk being used as very good and nourishing fodder for the bullocks, during the cold winter months. The gur or jaggery produced in the village was converted into white sugar in what were known as small *karkhanas* in the village itself. All this has practically disappeared within the last few years since the advent of large sugar factories, and when these factories were put out of action last year by the earthquake, one of the problems which had to be faced by the Government and the Bihar Central Relief Committee, was as to how to save the lakhs of acres of sugarcane in the fields and we had to fall back on the old cane-crushers which had to be made in a hurry till the factories began to work again.

In the villages, the oil used to be pressed out of seeds by the village oilman in his small oil-mill. There was no substitute for ghee like what is called vegetable ghee.

The houses used to be made of mud-walls or of bricks and stone pieces all to be had in the villages or made by hand in the villages. The roof used to be of straw or tiles produced in the village and, in the case of the very well-to-do people, of bricks. Today in the larger cities bricks are made in factories, and factory-made tiles have invaded even the countryside. But we have also corrugated steel sheets made in this country or imported from outside.

Parts of the door frames, windows and eaves are made of material imported or imported wholesale.

When we turn to the inside of the house, the utensils once used to be mostly of brass or bell metal or copper made in the neighbourhood and not a few earthen vessels were used. Today they are being replaced by imported or swadeshi factory-made aluminium pots, enamelware, glass crockery and chinaware.

Not only has the shape and form of furniture undergone change but the place

from which they come for the well-to-do people has shifted from the village to the cities and even to foreign countries. The poorer people have, of course, no furniture worth mentioning.

The method of transport has been revolutionised and caused not inconsiderable unemployment.

It is unnecessary to multiply instances. We see how the whole economy of our village life has been changed and destroyed. But it is not only the economic loss that has told. We are getting foreign and mill-made cloth in the place of the hand-made khaddar. A vast number of people have not only lost their employment by the introduction of machine-made cloth—foreign and Indian—those that are being employed in the factories are torn away from their natural and healthier surroundings and are forced to live in conditions which make neither for physical well-being nor moral improvement. Apart from these disadvantages, which are inevitable in all factories and large-scale production, we have to eat rice flour, sugar and oil without vitamin and in many cases adulterated, to live in houses covered with tin sheets which give no protection from heat in summer or from cold in winter and which only add to the noise during rains. We have to depend on aluminium and enamelled utensils which refuse to be kept clean and on crockery and chinaware which break without provocation. And, above all, these factories in the country, for whatever purpose established, have the one common and inevitable effect of increasing unemployment among the people instead of decreasing it.

The great problem in this country is how to find employment for the vast numbers of our masses. Attempts at industrialisation in this country which have been going on during the last sixty or seventy years have had to face many difficulties and will have to face more in the future under the new Constitution that is coming. To the extent they have succeeded, in spite of the great handicaps, they deserve credit for resourcefulness of their organisers. But they have signally failed to solve the problem of unemployment. We know that today more people are dependent on agriculture than they were, say, fifty years ago—not only when you consider the mere numbers affected but also when you consider the proportion of population dependent on it.

We can never hope to find employment for the entire unemployed population of this country by industrialisation and large-scale production. We have to fall back upon these village and cottage industries. They have a wonderful vitality. To mention only one instance—the handlooms in India are able in a considerable measure to hold their own even today in spite of competition by foreign and Indian mills. Some years ago I read that in the Province of Bihar and Orissa alone they produced cloth worth 5 to 6 crores of rupees and I believe till very recently they were supplying nearly a third of our cloth demand. This they have been able to maintain in spite of all the capital, skill and scientific knowledge now employed in factories. I venture to think that if even a tenth of that capital, skill and scientific knowledge could be made available to village industries, they would be able to hold their own in many fields. They have died

out because we have not cared to think of them, because we have not given them either the capital or the technical up-to-date scientific knowledge to keep them abreast of the times, because, above all, we have refused to support them. In the last fifteen years some attention has been given by the All-India Spinners' Association to the revival and encouragement of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, and we have obtained results which are encouraging to a degree. Not only has the quality of the cloth, both as regards its fineness and its durability, improved considerably but also prices have gone down, and today we have entered upon a new experiment of assuring to the spinner who is supposed to be a very low-paid worker as much as she requires for feeding and clothing her and as much as she can earn anywhere in India in any work which she can get, and we hope we shall succeed in this without making any considerable addition to the price of khaddar when the experimental stage has been passed. I am convinced that if only a part of the capital and skill and state patronage and aid that are now employed in our large cloth mills had been available for khadi we would have been able to show that we can produce as much cloth, as good cloth, and perhaps, also as cheap cloth as are produced in the mills, and that without having to import any machinery from foreign countries, without having to send out anything for replacement of parts: We would have further given employment to at least ten persons where a factory gives to one and we could have kept up a host of supplementary industries giving employment to others who have been rendered unemployed on account of the disappearance of the main industry.

What is true of khaddar is more or less true of other village industries. We can speak of khadi with some confidence as we have gained some experience of it. The Village Industries Association will learn from the experience of the All-India Spinners' Association and will undoubtedly be able soon to give even a better account of its activities. But it is not enough for us to watch and wait for the result. We must all help and it is undoubtedly true that each one of us can help. Those who are inclined to give their time and service will find in the work of khadi and revival of village industries enough to interest them and keep them engaged—enough, I say, even to excite them; for what greater excitement can there be than to see with one's own eyes hungry mouths being fed, shivering children being clothed, and the groaning sick being tended? Those who want to give money have an object in which charity does not debase the receiver but enables him to look like a man to man. We want work for people and not charity and any help given to these movements serves to supply work. Those who are unable to give their time and money can yet help and have no excuse for not helping. They can help by purchasing the products of these village and cottage industries. If we started purchasing them, the industries would spring up in no time. We have to realise that it is our duty to help solve the unemployment problem and that it can be solved only by the revival of these industries. These village industries will not be able to create millionaires but they will be able to feed millions of hungry men and women and we need to feed these millions more than the millionaires in this country. It is with these high aims that the Congress

has taken up this work of revival of village industries with khadi, as Mahatma Gandhi has said, in the centre, like the sun in the midst of the planets, and we hope that this effort will receive the support of all and will be blessed. I ask each one of you to help as best as you can and at least by purchasing products of these industries. I declare this Exhibition open.

16. Statement by J.B. Kripalani, General Secretary of the Congress, regarding a controversy in the Urdu Press over a chapter of his book on Basic Education

My attention has been drawn to a controversy going on in a section of the Urdu Press over a chapter of my book on Basic Education, which appeared recently in some papers. This chapter was first published in the issue of *Vishwabharati* February last under the caption "The Unity of the Gandhian Way." It seems to have reappeared in some English dailies. The newspaper *Madina* translated portions of the chapter in Urdu which has raised the controversy in question. An English translation of what has appeared in Urdu in the *Madina* has been kindly supplied to me by Maulvi Hafizurahman. From this I find that the Urdu translation as given by the *Madina* is far from faithful. If anybody wants to form a correct idea of what I have written he should read the original in English and better still, read the particular chapter as a part of my book on Basic Education.

In the Urdu Press it is also alleged that what I have written is in my capacity as the General Secretary of the Congress. The book, which bears the title *The Latest Fad*, has been written by me in my individual capacity and represents my views. What I have discussed there is not Congress policies but the interpretation of the scheme of Basic Education against the background of Gandhiji's general philosophy. The Congress policy and programmes are embodied from time to time in the Congress resolutions. In this book I have not discussed these resolutions.

Gandhiji's philosophy, as I have pointed out in my book, is based on ideals of non-violence, truth, justice and equality. These ideals are not against any religion or culture. The practical programmes of socio-political reform, derived from these principles—the programmes of charkha, village industries, removal of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity, spread of Hindustani, etc.—nowhere come in conflict with the principles and practice of any religion. I have, in my book, contrasted the revolutionary principles of Gandhiji's philosophy with those of the Socialists and the Bolsheviks. I have not compared them with any religion, for the simple reason that they do not come in conflict with any religion. I believe that what Gandhiji stands for is not a political change but a socio-political readjustment. There are certain social and economic factors in collective life which are not inconsistent with any religion. For instance the Bolsheviks believe in big centralised industry, and Gandhiji believes in decentralised cottage

industries. Both these industrial systems create differing social orders. But such differing social orders are neither in favour of nor against any particular religious culture. A Hindu might say that removal of untouchability affects his culture. But that would be absurd. Apart from social reform, no political reform can allow untouchability. Advocacy of equal opportunities for women may result in some social changes, but such changes cannot be said to come in conflict with any religious culture as a whole. Particular habits and customs would surely be affected, but that can scarcely be helped. British rule has affected particular customs and habits of Hindus and Muslims, but that does not mean that the British have interfered with our religion and culture. Gandhiji's political or social programme does not seek to change religious beliefs. Consequently it does not seek to change any religious culture.

17. Statement by Sri Krishna Sinha on the formation of ministry in Bihar

29 March 1937

Having been invited by the Governor for the formation of a ministry for Bihar I interviewed him on the 24th, 25th and again this morning and discussed the matter with him. I explained to him that I could form a ministry only if H.E. could assure me that with regard to the Constitutional acts of my Cabinet he would not use his special powers or set aside its advice. Within the scope of Provincial Autonomy there must be real responsible self-government and the Government of the Province must be carried on according to the declared will of the people. If we were to be asked to take up the responsibility of Provincial Government we must have the fullest freedom of action within the sphere of Provincial Autonomy. The special powers given for certain purposes meant a negation of real responsible Government and they must not be used. The Governor could create a convention straightforwardly by giving the required assurance. This he would not agree. In the circumstances it was impossible for me to form a ministry and I had, therefore, thankfully to decline the offer.

It is really sad that H.E. should not have seen his way to agree not to use his special powers. It demonstrates clearly once more the nature of Government we are going to have in Provinces. It is really to be autocracy under the thin veil of so-called autonomy. My party has been returned to the Assembly in an overwhelming majority by more than 75% of the votes polled. The electorate has given its approval in clear and distinct terms to the policy and programme of the party laid down in its election manifesto; and still a party with such a majority to give effect to the popular mandate has to depend on the goodwill of the Governor and not on the basic principle of responsible Government.

It is very difficult to say what is going to happen next. It may be that the

Governor may call upon non-Congressmen in the Legislature to form a ministry. I do not know what reply he will get from them. I would wish them to join the Congress in the demand for the assurance we asked for, as it was not intended to be in the interest of a Congress ministry but to enable any ministry of whatever party and with whatever programme to function independently and not merely depend on the mercy of the Governor. It is essential for carrying on the Government in accordance with the real wish of the people.

A word to the electorate. The Congress stands for complete independence. The problems facing the country cannot be solved unless the people are given unfettered freedom to decide things for themselves. The electorate has given its approval to this objective of the Congress. It was in pursuance of this objective that the Congress wanted this assurance. The Governor has thought fit to refuse it. Now it will be for the electorate to back up this demand for assurance and wring it from bureaucracy, which is unwilling to part with power.

Before concluding I must express my appreciation of the courtesy shown by H.E. throughout the long discussion.

18. From Biswanath Das regarding his interview with the Governor of Orissa to discuss the formation of ministry

OFFICE OF THE ORISSA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY CONGRESS PARTY

Bakrabad, Cuttack
March 29, 1937

Dear Sir,

In continuation of my letter of the 24th instant I have to state that I communicated with Babu Rajendra Prasad on the telephone on the 25th as also on the 26th instant.

As I have already informed you, I had my first interview with the Governor on the 24th morning. An agreed statement regarding the interview as per copy attached was sent to the Press. This was so because the Governor refused any assurance on his part and I was not willing to proceed with discussions unless the first preliminary, i.e., the assurances as per the A.I.C.C. resolution were forthcoming. The Governor also gave me a hint that it was open to me to state that I, as leader of the party, was satisfied with the assurance and so get round the resolution of the A.I.C.C. I refused to be a party to such a statement.

On the 25th instant afternoon the Governor invited Sjt. B.N. Das, Advocate, and a member of our party, to see him in the evening of the same day. No purpose was mentioned in the letter. Sjt. Das saw the Governor with the permission of the party, as the full party meeting was in session at Cuttack on that date. As the

Governor opened the question of forming the ministry Sjt. Das told him (Governor) that he (Governor) could discuss the matter with the leader only. Late in the night I received an invitation for a second interview with the Governor.

I saw the Governor for the second time on the 26th morning, and we had discussions for about an hour. I found him quite unwilling to give any assurance. I had, therefore, no hesitation in telling him that my party could not accept office. A copy of the agreed statement regarding the second interview is enclosed. Since I found in him a desire that the party could have been consulted, I promised to consult the members of the party available at Cuttack, and if the members so desired, your committee as well. Having consulted the members present here, I found them unanimous in refusing to accept office. So I did not find it necessary to communicate with your committee on this question. My final reply was communicated to the Governor on the 27th evening (copy enclosed).

I learn that the Government is trying to constitute a ministry with two big landholders and a Mohomedan. Anyway it is now clear that we have to sit in opposition. Orissa is a new Province with people from three different Provinces up till now governed with different sets of Statutes, Rules and Regulations. Public feeling, therefore, favours acceptance of office.

Party solidarity, as far as can be judged at present, is strong; but I learn that vigorous attempts are and will continue to be made to cause defection in the party and snatch away a few members. Attempts are being made to harass our workers, sympathisers and important voters in some areas. I am requesting members of the party to keep in touch with their constituency.

Please advise us as to the future course of action, if you propose to have any uniformity in all the Provinces. The first meeting of our Legislature is likely to meet on or about the 12th April, though no formal notice has been issued as yet.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
for Biswanath Das
(Leader)

(Copy of statement)

I interviewed His Excellency the Governor on invitation, on the 24th morning, regarding the formation of ministry in Orissa. I pointed out to him the necessity of his giving me an assurance in terms of the A.I.C.C. resolution, passed at Delhi, before I could constitute a Cabinet of Ministers. His Excellency was prepared to render help and cooperation to the ministry; but stated that it was not possible for him to give me such an assurance. I have informed the Working Committee accordingly.

19. From V. Gangaraju and others regarding the rejection of K. Satyanarayana-murthy's candidature for the Central Assembly from the East and West Godavari-cum-Kistna constituency

Ellore
W. Godavari District
16-6-1937

Dear Sir,

It is with deep regret we draw your pointed attention to the following facts: That the East Godavari and West Godavari-cum-Kistna constituency seat of the Central Assembly has fallen vacant owing to the resignation of K. Nageshwar Rao Garu was announced on 28th May in the local papers and applications for the same were invited and were to reach the Provincial Congress Committee office not later than 2nd June (4 days' interval). Thus the concerned District Congress Committee (four in number) of the constituency were deprived of an opportunity to meet officially and recommend any candidate. Still some Taluka Committees and the East Kistna District Congress (which met accidentally) have recommended Mr. K. Satyanarayananamurthy; and the Congress organisations of West Godavari District and West Kistna have unofficially by a thumping majority supported Mr. Satyanarayananamurthy. East Godavari is unique in that it is divided in its support. Further, the Provincial Congress Socialist Party, the Andhra Provincial Ryots Association, the Provincial Youth League and the several branches of these in the four districts of the constituency have *unanimously* supported his candidature.

Mr. K. Satyanarayananamurthy has joined the Congress movement in 1921 in the N.C.O. days and in the recent Satyagraha and Civil Disobedience movements, has gone to jail twice and was the captain of the District Satyagraha Dala. He is the Joint Secretary of the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee at present and from the last two years he has been strenuously doing Congress work. Besides, he was the Secretary (formerly) and now the President of the Andhra Provincial Ryots' Association. He is a man of spotless character holding high ideals, doing unostentatious work. Hence he is universally loved and esteemed by one and all of all the political associations of the districts. For this very reason he holds the unique position of the Secretary of the P.C.C. besides the secretaryship of the Provincial Ryots' Association (till recently) simultaneously.

The P.C.C. has by a majority of 8 versus 5 votes recommended Mr. Satyanarayananamurthy on 3rd June. Now in today's papers it is announced that Mr. Tirumalaraao is fixed up for this seat by Sardar Patel. It is highly regrettable that the Sardar is completely and thoroughly misled by interested parties into rejecting Mr. Satyanarayananamurthy's candidature and imposing Mr. Tirumalaraao's on the constituency. Even the concerned D.C.C.s have not been asked to give their opinion afresh before their recommendation is brushed aside. Nor is the P.C.C. Working Committee consulted again in the matter excepting

the President and General Secretary who are interested parties in the affair.

Under these circumstances we strongly request you to go into the whole affair threadbare and revise the All India Parliamentary Sub-Committee's decision in favour of Mr. Satyanarayananamurthy and restore harmony and confidence in the public and the concerned District Congress Committees in the constituency.

We earnestly request you to communicate your opinion to the Working Committee and the President of the P.C.C. that meets at Nandyal on 19th and 20th instants.

We remain,

Yours obediently,

1. V.. Gangaraju, M.L.C., President, Ellore Taluk Congress Committee
2. G. Satyanarayana, General Secretary, West Godavari D.C.C.
3. M. Rangayya, L.M. & S., Member, P.C.C., and Ex-President, P.C.C.
4. J.B. Needu, M.L.A., Member, A.I.C.C. Working Committee, Andhra P.C.C., Ex-President, D.C.C., West Godavari

20. From Buddha Gaya Defence League to Mahatma Gandhi on the removal by the Government of India of the official custodian of the Buddha Gaya shrine

BUDDHA GAYA DEFENCE LEAGUE

32 Frances Road
Wellawatte
Colombo (Ceylon)
25th June 1937

Dear Sir,

It is perhaps not generally realised in India the gravity of the situation created in the Buddhist world by the recent act of the Government of India in removing the official custodian of the Buddha Gaya shrine. The custodian may have been entirely ineffectual but his existence showed that the Government exercised a measure of control over the shrine, however nominal. The withdrawal of this officer, amounting to the virtual surrender of all control of the shrine to the Mahant, is like an intimation to the Buddhists that their efforts of over forty years have been in vain and have not taken them a step nearer to their goal. To protest against the removal of the custodian the Behar Government has replied that the local Sub-Inspector of Police is able to look after such duties. It is natural

that all this should appear most unsatisfactory to the Buddhists whose anxiety to make Buddha Gaya the centre of pilgrimage it deserves to be is ardent and genuine, and it is no wonder that the present act of the Indian Government in removing the official custodian of the place has brought uneasiness to a head in Ceylon, which is known to fame as the Lord of Pure Buddhism, and whose inhabitants are mainly Buddhists.

Consequently, a strong movement is afoot to organise a campaign to regain Buddha Gaya by resorting to non-violent Satyagraha. It is an indisputable fact that Ceylon has since Buddha's death always taken the lead in defending or propagating his wonderful doctrine. And in the present struggle for freedom Ceylon has once more shown its importance in taking the lead to organise a Satyagraha campaign. A Buddha Gaya Defence League has been formed and to judge from the results it has obtained by literature and propaganda meetings throughout the country, it has received wide support from many Buddhist organisations, in and out of the island. A number of Indians who took an active part in your political movement in India have also expressed their willingness to help us in this movement. These include some of those who took part in picketing at Tarakeshwar Shiva Temple in Bengal, and Gurudwar Temple of the Sikhs in the Punjab. Burma and Chittagong are also in full sympathy with the movement and have promised active support.

Indeed, the climax in the Buddha Gaya question has been reached in the purblind action of the Viceroy in discontinuing the custodian of this ancient shrine which is held in veneration by more than a third of the human kind. As you are aware all constitutional methods, hitherto employed to regain the shrine, have been a thorough failure. The Indian Government has refused to help us; the Indian National Congress has refused to help us; the Hindu Maha Sabha has refused to help us; and so we are now left with the only alternative possible, that is, we have decided to offer Satyagraha at the Buddha Gaya shrine and picket all pilgrims to the temple. As it is a fitting method in keeping with the tenets of Buddhism, it has already received wide support from the Buddhist world of Japan, China, Burma, Ceylon, Cambodia, Chittagong, Singapore and Siam. Buddha sat at the foot of the historic Bodhi tree at Buddha Gaya, resolved to gain enlightenment, and he got up triumphant. Similarly, we have decided to squat at Buddha Gaya until the adamant Mahant yields to the demand of the Buddhist world. Ahimsa is the mainstay of Buddhism, and therefore, the principle of Ahimsa must predominate in any Buddhist movement. You have incorporated this very principle in all your movements in India to regain liberty in social and political matters. The Hindus themselves have resorted to Satyagraha to gain their objects with regard to a number of Hindu temples. This is not a question that merely interests the Buddhists. It is something more than that. Buddha Gaya is the emblem of the greatest civilisation in India, nay, of the whole East. But the irony of fate is that this sacred emblem of the great Ahimsa doctrine is vested in the hands of a Saivite priest who practises animal sacrifice. Therefore, we have appealed to every Buddhist—both layman and priest—to employ this holy

weapon of Satyagraha against the Mahant who ignores and tramples down the sentiments and the feelings of all true national religionists. It is proposed that a band of lion-hearted volunteers from Ceylon, Burma, Chittagong, India, Siam, Japan, China and other Buddhist countries should meet in Calcutta and march to Gaya for the purpose of offering Satyagraha at the Buddha Gaya shrine. Already a large number of sturdy, strong and self-sacrificing volunteers who are even prepared to die in this noble struggle for freedom and of regaining a holy object which is cherished not only by the Buddhists but by all those who love fairplay and justice, have been enlisted to go to Gaya. This army will be reinforced and the fight will go on until the Mahant comes to terms with the peace-loving Buddhists.

This is the serious situation which has been created by the recent action of the Indian Government in regard to a question of great importance to the Buddhists which has been engaging their attention for nearly quarter of a century. There is an idea prevalent that the agitation for the restoration of the sacred site of Buddha Gaya to the Buddhists is of recent growth. The efforts of the pioneer of this movement are now lost sight of, and it is hardly remembered that Sir Edwin Arnold, to whose lucid and charming exposition of Buddhism, not only in his imperishable "Light of Asia" but also in his other works, the English reader owes so much of his knowledge, was the prime mover of this bloodless crusade. The Buddhist world had, indeed, well nigh forgotten this hallowed and most interesting centre of their faith—the Mecca, the Jerusalem, of a million Oriental congregations—when Sir Edwin Arnold visited the place before 1896. An account of this movement he wrote among the series of articles he contributed in his retirement to the London *Daily Telegraph* and which subsequently were embodied in his book *East and West* published in that year. In that book he tells us that he was grieved to see Maharatta peasants performing *Shraddha* at the Buddha Gaya shrine, and thousands of precious ancient relics of carved stone inscribed with Sanskrit lying in piles around. He states: "If you walk in that spot which all these scores of millions of our race love so dearly, you would observe with shame and grieve in the mango groves, to the East of Lilajan, ancient statues plastered to the walls of an irrigating well near the village Mucharin—identified with the Muchalinda in the tank. Stones carved with Buddha's images are to be found used as weights to the levers for drawing water. I have seen ryots in the villages surrounding using beautifully carved blocks as steps to their huts. I have seen three feet high statues in an excellent state of preservation, buried under rubbish to the East of the Mahant's Baradari. A few are plastered into the eastern outer wall of the garden along the bank of Lilajan; and the Asoka pillars, the most ancient relics of the site—indeed, the most antique memorials of all India—which graced a temple pavement, are now used as posts of the Mahant's kitchen." Ashamed of this deplorable state of the shrine and the Saivite priest's indifference, Sir Edwin came down to Ceylon and made the suggestion first to the late Sri Sumangala, the Chief High Priest of Ceylon, that representations should be made to the Queen's Government in Bengal to have Buddha Gaya placed in

the hands of a representative committee of Buddhist nations. There never was an idea which took root and spread so fast and fast as that thrown up by Sir Edwin. The suggestion quickly became a universal aspiration, first in Ceylon and then in other Buddhist countries. Sir Edwin wrote to Sir Arthur Gordon, the then Governor of Ceylon. He consulted high authorities, among them General Cunningham, who thoroughly sympathised with the demand of the Buddhists and declared it entirely feasible. Sir Arthur Gordon was himself very well disposed to the idea. Lord Dufferin warmly received it at Calcutta; Lord Connemara in Madras; and at that time, if only the Government of Downing Street had been more alive to a grand opportunity, it would have been easy to make satisfactory terms with the then Mahant, and to have effected the transfer of the holy place to a representative committee—at one stroke delighting and conciliating all Buddhistic Asia. While the idea was thus spreading throughout Asia, and a large society—the Mahabodhi Society—had become established with the special purpose of acquiring the guardianship of the sacred site, the Mahant grew more exacting in his expectations, and clung closer to the possession of the temple. He memorialised the Government in his alarm, and the local authorities for quiet's sake reported adversely to the negotiations. Nevertheless Asia did not abandon its new desire, and Sir Edwin was persuaded to interview the then Secretary of State for India, Lord Cross. The Secretary of State for India sympathised with the demand and promised to consult the Government and to write to the then Viceroy, Lord Lansdown, if the idea was approved. In due course the Viceroy replied that the idea was legitimate and beneficial, and that so long as no religious ill feeling was aroused, and no pecuniary grant asked from the Indian Treasury, the Calcutta Government would be inclined to favour any friendly negotiations.

In the meantime, the Mahabodhi Society went to court, and after a series of law suits with the Mahant, after spending more than hundred thousand rupees, the policy of appealing to law failed, with the High Court of Calcutta, by a judgement which is declared to be erroneous and untenable, holding in favour of the Mahant.

Even then neither the Mahabodhi Society nor the Buddhist world gave up the fight. Ceylon always kept up the agitation. In 1924, the Ceylon Buddhists approached the Indian National Congress. Mr. A.E. Goonesinghe, the Labour Leader of Ceylon, a Member of the present State Council, and a Member of the Buddha Gaya Defence League, and Dr. Cassius A. Pereira, a prominent Buddhist leader and President of the Servants of the Buddha were sent to the Belgaum Congress to negotiate with the Indian leaders. On arrival at Belgaum Mr. Shaukat Ali took Mr. Goonesinghe to you and discussed the question. You asked him, "What have you Buddhists been doing all this time? It is preposterous that Buddha Gaya should be in the hands of non-Buddhists. To me it would be a case of life and death. I would have given my life to take Buddha Gaya." When they went to the Congress the Buddhist delegates went with the hope of getting a resolution adopted regarding the question, as even Muslim leaders such as Dr.

Kitchlew and Mr. Shaukat Ali had promised their support to the Mission. But when he informed you of what they desired, you were not quite willing that a resolution should be brought in the Congress, though Mr. Goonesinghe explained to you that what was desired was a recognition of the rights of the Buddhist world to Buddha Gaya by the National Assembly of India. He also pointed out to you that a resolution had already been passed in respect of this at the Coconada Congress of 1923. Then you asked him to see Babu Rajendra Prasad and Pandit Malaviya. He saw Rajendra Prasad and he confessed to Mr. Goonesinghe that though he was called upon by the resolution of the Coconada Congress to submit a report he had failed to do so. He promised to get you to bring up a resolution at the Belgaum Congress. Then he saw Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar. The latter promised to do anything for the Buddhists. Mr. Rajagopalachariar told Mr. Goonesinghe that whoever may be in possession of Buddha Gaya, whatever use may be made of it, however much one may have spent on it, the place should be restored to the Buddhists immediately. Mr. Goonesinghe saw Pandit Motilal Nehru. He too promised to support the resolution and he told Mr. Goonesinghe to see to it that you permit this resolution brought up in Belgaum Congress. Later on Mr. Goonesinghe and Dr. Pereira with the Burmese delegate and the Nepal delegate with Professor Kosamby, saw Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. Pt. Malaviya suggested to the Ceylon delegation that Buddha Gaya should be under the control of a joint committee of Buddhists and Hindus. When Mr. Goonesinghe communicated this news to you, you exclaimed: "It is ridiculous. The Buddhists alone [should] have control over it." Eventually the resolution was brought up at the Subjects Committee of the Congress and there was only one vote against it. Thereafter you referred the resolution to the All India Congress Committee, and Babu Rajendra Prasad was invited to submit a report. But nothing has come out of it.

In starting this campaign of Satyagraha we have decided to follow the advice given to Mr. Goonesinghe by Swami Viswananda when he went to plead for the cause of the Belgaum Congress. The Swami advised the Buddhists to adopt Satyagraha at Buddha Gaya until the place was secured. Therefore we appeal to you to wield your influence to restore Buddha Gaya to the Buddhists. It is very nice of the Hindus to extend the left hand of fellowship to their Buddhist brothers, but why forget to strengthen the right arm by holding it forth to the nations of the Near and the Far East? The Hindus are strangely inconsistent in fighting for the cause of Khilafat, while refusing to restore to rightful owners the holy Buddha Gaya in their land. It would be consistent and help the cause of truth if they would also direct their attention to do the right to their Buddhist brethren. India can never rise so long as her children continue to be ungrateful to Him who had made her name great. She was a beacon light of the world during the Buddhist period, with her splendid universities unto which came thousands of students from different parts of Asia to receive enlightenment, but for the last thousand years her people have continued to sink lower and lower because they allowed to be destroyed the constructive work done during the Buddhist period.

And the time is now come to make amends by first restoring Buddha Gaya to the Buddhists.

The five hundred millions of people living in China, Cambodia, Japan, Siam, Burma, Tibet, Mongolia, Manchuria and Ceylon look up to India as their holy land, while the people of India have refused to welcome them to their ancient home. The holy temple of Buddha Gaya, where the Lord Buddha thought out the doctrine of Ahimsa 2,500 years ago, today is scene of Himsa, where the Sanyasis of the Saivite sect slaughter hundreds of goats on the Kali Puja day year after year. The sin of killing in that holy spot is truly great. Not until the whole body politic of Hindus rise and undo this act of unrighteous injustice could they gain Swaraj. The great Promulgator, the Lord Buddha, who proclaimed the doctrine of Ahimsa, should again be invited to his own kingdom. Buddha Gaya should be restored, the Buddhists must be called back from their exile, and made to live in their own sanctified vihara. Then will India be strong.

While appealing to you on behalf of the Buddhist world to make a clarified statement giving out your own views and the views of the Indian nation and the procedure India will adopt in regard to this burning question of the Buddhists, we quote a statement issued by the Poet Rabindranath Tagore:

"I am sure it will be admitted by all Hindus who are true to their own ideals, that it is an intolerable wrong to allow the temple raised on the spot where Lord Buddha attained His Enlightenment, to remain under the control of a rival sect which can neither have an intimate knowledge of nor sympathy for the Buddhist religion and its rites of worship. I consider it to be a sacred duty for all individuals believing in freedom and justice to help to restore this great historical site to the community of people who still reverentially carry on that particular current of history in their own leading faith."

Hoping you will do justice, we are,

Yours faithfully,
(Sd.)
Secretaries
Buddha Gaya Defence League

21. From P.C. Ghosh, Member, A.I.C.C. (Bengal), to the General Secretary, A.I.C.C., regarding Jawaharlal Nehru's statement on "Congress and Labour and Peasant Organisations"

2 July 1937

Dear Sir,

In yesterday's papers we find a statement by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on "Congress and Labour and Peasant Organisations". The statement, it appears, has been given in Panditji's personal capacity but it cannot be forgotten that he is

the President of the Congress and as such any statement issued by him carries with it the prestige of his official position. In my humble opinion, therefore, the President of the Congress should only adumbrate the official view of the Congress and not his personal view. It becomes very embarrassing for Congressmen who hold opposite view. Open criticism by Congressmen of the President not merely looks odd but it is not good in the interest of the Congress. But it may become inevitable under certain circumstances, specially if the President takes up his pen in controversial matters. The subject matter of Panditji's statement is controversial. In the present instance, however, the Working Committee is meeting very soon and so I have been saved from the unhappy position of going to the Press. I request you to put the matter before the W.C. and place before the public its considered opinion. I hope you will not mind if I put in a few words for favour of consideration by the members of the Working Committee.

In my humble opinion any attempt at organisation of separate Kisan Sabhas by Congressmen is not merely duplication of work and waste of energy but is fraught with grave danger. If the Congress Committees function properly in village areas they can very well look after the interest of the peasants. And in fact properly organised Congress Committees in the villages contain about 80 per cent of working class people among their members. And as such they influence the decision of the Congress. In such places even if the Kisan Sabhas are organised they become either superfluous or ineffective. In areas where Congress Committees do not function properly any organisation having the interest of the people will thrive. But the Congress is usually considered by the peasantry as their own organisation, so instead of creating new organisations there it should be the imperative duty of Congressmen to make Congress organisations effective in areas where they are not. And I believe it is the duty of the Working Committee and its President to work in such a manner so that the Congress Committees may be effective.

It is contended by many, and even Sj. Narendra Dev in his recent Sahabad speech (as reported in the Press) is reported to have said that Congress cannot give full scope and play to the aspirations and desires of the peasants. This is not merely a misreading of the situation but is a serious injustice to the Congress which has the largest hold on the masses. Congress cannot claim to be a national organisation if 80 per cent of its people cannot find full scope there. Congress being the organisation of the whole nation, it is said its leadership will fall on the middle class people (upper or lower). If that is true in the Congress now, it is equally true in the case of Kisan Sabhas also.

If Congressmen are allowed to organise separate Kisan Sabhas I can only visualise many All-India, Provincial and District Kisan Sabhas with more or less same designations to represent as many political groups as we have in the country. No one can prevent it. And experience teaches us that many Sabhas will be brought into existence overnight not because of any interest of the Kisans being sacrificed but on account of leadership.

These Kisan Sabhas are said to be anti-imperialist organisations and so there

will be many parallel organisations to the Congress which is bound to create disruptive forces in the country, and will be great impediments to progress towards freedom. Congressmen should not encourage growth of any other political organisation in the country, because it might prove a thorn in its way one day.

The question might be asked what about Kisan Sabhas organised by non-Congressmen. I do not think any non-Congressman is organising any Kisan Sabha with the objective of attaining India's freedom with which the welfare of the peasants is indissolubly connected. I have no doubt such Sabhas will have no permanent hold on the people.

It is contended that formation of separate Sabhas will bring large numbers of peasants in those associations, and if Congressmen control them they will be more or less under the influence of the Congress. Both these contentions are not warranted by facts. It is comparatively easier to organise the factory labourers and the like. In spite of this, although the Trade Union Congress has been brought into existence for many years, yet more than 5 per cent of the labourers are not included in the list of members of different unions, under the Trade Union Congress. And even in places where trade unions are controlled by Congressmen they are under the influence of the Congress only so far as Congress agrees with them.

There is a distinct opposition to the national flag in these trade unions and also Kisan Sabhas organised by labour union people and people having their ways of thinking. Trade union people are unwilling to accept the tricolour flag as the national flag. They even prefer not to join any Congress function rather than join with the national flag. Of course, the Congress President's recent circular regarding flag has given a premium on their revolting attitude. It has been a thin end of the wedge. They are no longer to hold the national flag. If in Congress functions (which are national functions) people are allowed to take part with any other flag but the national flag the national character of our flag is taken away.

Panditji also has shown the various complications that are bound to arise with the formation of separate Kisan Sabhas, but he has also given us no solution of those things; only there is a spirit of resignation to the inevitable happenings.

Before concluding, I want to add a few words on the anti-imperialistic united front, without which it will remain incomplete.

Great Britain is the greatest imperialistic country in the world and our efforts to free ourselves is the greatest anti-imperialistic fight of the world. Just at present we cannot, and dare not, fight any other phase of imperialism whether it be German, Italian, French or Bolshevik imperialism. In fulfilling our mission, we shall serve the cause of anti-imperialism in all parts of the world. With this object of freeing India there is no other public organisation in India. Trade Union Congress is no such organisation. It is an organisation formed under the Trade Union Act for a definite purpose which is not attainment of India's freedom. Of course I do not deny that any organisation of a group of Indian people for their betterment is bound to help indirectly in our freedom movement. But that cannot

make the organisation anti-imperialistic. So no question of anti-imperialistic united front arises. I need hardly say that the question of a united front among different organisations arises only when there is no predominant organisation practically representing 90 per cent of the people. Congress is such an institution. In our case, a united front should mean unity of action among different sections of Congressmen representing different views. I do not, however, deny that there are many defects in the working of the Congress organisation, but a dynamic organisation like the Congress can change and is ever changing. So let me hope Congressmen will not talk of a vague united front but will make the organisation a true representative of the people for the liberation of India by the people of India and for the people of India. Any other step will be suicidal both for the Congress and the nation.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
P.C. Ghosh

22. *From Mahatma Gandhi to Buddha Gaya Defence League in reply to their letter dated 25 June 1937*

Segaon
Wardha
July 11, 1937

Dear Friend,

I have your long letter. I have read it most carefully. I can conceive the possibility of one who is without malice, without anger, who has behind him a long record of service, whose every act is actuated by love, and who is saturated with the spirit of the Buddha sitting motionless near the entrance till the temple passes to those to whom it should rightly belong. But such is not your scheme. Nor have you such a person in view so far as I am aware. Nor have you done the spade work which alone can warrant the supreme step. Therefore, however much I may be in sympathy with you, I fear I cannot endorse the movement adumbrated by you in your letter.

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

23. From the Honorary Secretary, Central Zamindars' Association, Patna, giving an extract from the Resolution passed by the Association on tenant-zamindar relationship

CENTRAL ZAMINDARS' ASSOCIATION, PATNA

Jataul Mansion
Kadamkuan, Bankipur
16th July 1937

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to forward a copy of the resolution passed by the Executive Committee meeting of the Central Zamindars' Association, held on 11th July 1937, which runs as follows:

"5. Resolved that the Congress be requested to inform us the views of the Congress in connection with the no-rent campaign started by the tenants, the terrorist attitude of the tenants and the obstructions created by the tenants in the Zamindars' *bakhsat* lands; and what steps the Congress proposes to be taken by the Zamindars for the achievement of the cooperation of all sections having any concern with the agriculture to improve the condition of the agriculturists and to remove the Kisan grievances."

Will you please further inform us by what time do you expect the Kisan Inquiry Committee Report?

We are anxious to remove the real grievances of the tenants if there are any and to do our best for improving the condition of the agriculturist and the agriculture.

Excuse me for drawing your attention that several Zamindars have complained that many responsible persons of the Congress Committee deliver inflammatory and irresponsible speeches in the Kisan meetings and in the meetings organised by the Congress. In our opinion this class warfare will widen the gulf between the independence and the motherland. Instead of blaming each other it is better if all the well-wishers of the agriculturists sit together and try to improve the condition. If we be informed of the detailed grievances of the tenants we can approach the Zamindars and it would not be impossible to get some formula to settle the matter amicably. This will reduce unnecessary troubles and will be much more useful to the tenants. I hope you will agree with me that by cooperation we can do much for the benefit of the children of the soil.

I have the honour to be,
(Sd.)
Hony. Secretary

24. Report in the Advance dated 1 August 1937 on Bihar Premier's order lifting ban on Jogendra Shukul's gang

PATNA, July 1937. "United Press" reliably understands that Mr. Sri Krishna Sinha, Premier, has just passed orders that the ban on all persons, mostly youngmen, numbering about 50, included in the "Jogendra Shukul's gang", whose movements were restrained under the Criminal Tribes Act should be lifted immediately. Most of these youngmen belong to Motihari and Muzaffarpur districts in North Behar.

An official announcement is expected shortly.

25. Circular letter from M. Asaf Ali to the Chief Ministers of Provincial Governments regarding contribution from the Government of India for nation-building programmes of Provincial Governments

(Not to be released for publication before 7th August 1937)

CONGRESS PARTY IN INDIAN (CENTRAL) LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Delhi, 2nd August, 1937

URGENT

Subject:— The urgency of adequate contributions from the Government of India for the nation-building programme of Provincial Governments.

Sir,

I have the honour to state that the Congress Party in the Indian (Central) Legislative Assembly desires to move a resolution on the earliest occasion available during the forthcoming Simla session, recommending to the Governor-General-in-Council "to take immediate steps to offset all possible economies in the Central expenditure, and particularly the military expenditure with a view to make adequate contributions to the Provincial Governments, according to their needs, to enable them to undertake nation-building activities". I have, therefore, been directed to request you to be so good as to favour us with your Government's view on the subject to guide us in our endeavours to persuade the Governor-General-in-Council to release ample funds from the Central Exchequer for the use of your and other Provincial Governments. The next ballot for non-official resolutions will take place on the 19th of August 1937, and it is hoped that the resolution under reference will be moved on 3rd September 1937.

The views of your Government, if received before this date, will prove particularly helpful in the debate on the resolution.

2. We are proceeding on the assumption that the nation-building programmes, adumbrated by Provincial Governments, may not prove easy to execute without substantial contributions from the Centre. We feel that the urgent demands of almost every Province can be met only if adequate funds are available. But if certain sources of Provincial revenues have to be reduced to render much needed relief to the poorer section of the population, either some of the nation-building projects will have to be abandoned or postponed to an uncertain date, or the future expectations may have to be mortgaged to raise loans to carry out ameliorative schemes. These, however, are matters of which the Provincial Governments are the best judges. The only purpose we have in view is to suggest to the Governor-General-in-Council ways and means of saving money out of the Central revenue to be made available for the Provinces.

3. Generally speaking, it should not be impossible for the Central Government to effect considerable economies in more than one direction. But by far the most easily accessible direction, in our view, is the expenditure on the Army. Nothing is further from our thoughts than urging the adoption of a course which may result in the weakening of the absolutely necessary efficiency of the country's defences or the strength of the Indian Army, [but] it is possible for the Government of India to save Rs.20 to 25 crores annually (which should be distributed among the Provinces according to their needs) by replacing the British by Indian troops. As you are well aware, every British soldier costs us between 3 to 4 times as much as an Indian soldier or, in other words, the entire British force in India costs us a little more than the entire Indian force, although they are in the ratio of 1 to 3 or thereabouts respectively. The only grounds on which the retention of British troops in India has been sought to be justified are two. In the first place they are said to be necessary for *internal security*, and, in the second, they are said to be the *backbone* of the defence forces in India.

(a) In so far as the first ground is concerned, if the recommendation of the Simon Commission were not an ill-considered suggestion, each Province would have it in its power to maintain its own *Internal Security Army*. But even in the absence of such a scheme, it is for your Government to say whether you consider the British troops necessary for the internal security of your Province. We are convinced that even if the police force in your Province cannot be relied upon to play its part in the event of internal disturbances, which, with proper training we see no reason why it should not be, there is no reason whatsoever to doubt the capacity and fitness of the Indian troops to deal with any emergency, should one ever arises. If the Indian troops could win their laurels in Europe during the Great War against the most highly efficient forces of Germany armed with modern weapons, they may be expected to prove their mettle against defenceless and unarmed mobs. Moreover, with popular Governments in power, occasions for internal disorders of such dimensions as require the calling out of troops should be regarded as extremely remote.

(b) As regards the second ground, it is hardly worth while discussing it as a serious assertion. It is true that one of the Commanders-in-Chief of India asserted it in one of his public utterances, but it did not take him long to explain and modify this assertion the moment it was made plain in the Indian Legislatures that it was too serious an aspersion on the Indian Army.

(c) It would not be possible to analyse facts and figures, without being prolix, to prove that if the British troops are replaced by Indian troops not less than about Rs.20 crores can be saved and released for contributions to the Provinces every year.

But even further economies can be effected in the Army expenditure by (1) abandoning the futile Forward Policy on the N.W. Frontier (which has cost India a good deal more than Rupees one hundred crores during the past 40 years only, and even today is costing us Rupees one lac a day, as admitted by the Government of India); (2) effecting savings on the strategic Railways which mean a dead loss of about Rupees two crores a year; (3) retrenching the Frontier Constabulary System and replacing it by a more rational plan of conciliatory measures; (4) saving money from the Ecclesiastical Department which is maintained primarily for the benefit of the British troops; and (5) making all purchases and manufacturing all the materials needed for the Army in India. If the so-called semi-civilised frontier tribesmen and our other neighbours can manufacture arms of modern precision for their use, is there any reason why the Government of India cannot do the same? These are some of the directions in which economies can be effected, without in any way weakening the efficiency or strength of our defences, and according to our estimate no less than Rs.20 to 25 crores can be saved and released for the use of the Provinces.

4. What is said in the foregoing para does not exhaust the possibilities of economy. There is no department of the Central Government which does not admit of economies on a large scale. The scales of colossal salaries in the higher grades are flagrantly inordinate. The least that is possible in this direction is a steep cut in the higher scales, and a reasonably moderate cut in salaries above Rs.500 a month. The money so saved should be distributed among the Provinces for the relief of the poor, and nation-building programmes.

5. The Railways, so far from being a business proposition, have been a losing concern for a number of years. No less than Rupees 61 crores have to be written off before they can recommence their career with a clean slate, and no contributions to the general revenues can be expected from them if a proper Reserve and Depreciation Fund is to be maintained.

6. I can go on adding to this list, but it will suffice for my present purpose to invite your attention to these few illustrations (which are by no means exhaustive) of enormously-inequitable, if not also iniquitous, extravagance of the Government of India, and to request you to be so kind as to favour us with your

Government's view at an early date to enable us to persuade the Governor-General-in-Council to give effect to our recommendations.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
M. Asaf Ali
Honorary Secretary
Congress Party

Note: From the 5th August 1937 the office of the Party will be at 44-45,
Longwood Hotel, Simla.

26. Joint Press Statement by Pir Syed Jalal Shah, M.L.A., Secy., Muslim National Party, and Sardar Ajit Singh, M.L.A., Secy., Frontier Hindu-Sikh Nationalist Party, made at Abbottabad on 4 September 1937

As the result of the last Frontier Legislative Assembly elections, these two parties were formed with a view to work the Constitution and to take part in all the constitutional activities of the Province. Ultimately these parties, on the basis of a pact, formed a coalition Government. Since then the Government have been making honest attempts for the amelioration of the condition of the people of this Province. We also take a reasonable pride in declaring that it was in consideration of the unanimous recommendations of our parties that the ban against the Congress and other allied associations was lifted and political exiles, including Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Inayatullah Khan Allamai Mashriqui, were allowed to return to the Province and all notices under the Public Tranquillity Act were withdrawn. This, we are glad to say, was to a very great extent responsible for infusing renewed spirit and vigour into the public life of this Province. Ever since the formation of the ministry, attempts have been made to overthrow the present Government which became a *fait accompli* yesterday by the passing of a vote of no-confidence. We were hoping that a pure and undiluted ministry, a ministry which will inspire complete confidence in the minds of the people of this Province and others will be formed under the banner of the Congress and under the able guidance of the Congress leaders. But we are astonished to learn that attempts are being made to placate half-a-dozen members, including Rai Bahadur Chiman Lal, Rai Sahib Permanand, Khan Sahib Raja Abdur Rahman Khan, Khan Sahib Attai Khan and Khan Mohammad Sarwar Khan, Ex-E.A.C., who have openly refused to sign the Congress pledge. It is also rumoured that jobs like Ministership, Parliamentary Secretaries, and Deputy Speakership, etc. have also been offered to them. We do hope and pray that all this is not true for we can never reconcile ourselves to the idea that the

Congress, in this Province in particular, will be prepared to compromise their pronounced principles. The examples are still fresh in our mind of Orissa, U.P. and Bombay where the Congress refused to include, in the Cabinet, those not returned on Congress ticket though they were even prepared to sign the Congress pledge. We earnestly implore Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Babu Rajendra Prasad to kindly clarify the issues.

27. Press Statement by Pir Syed Jalal Shah, M.L.A., Secretary, United Muslim Nationalist Party of N.W.F.P. (The Indian Nation, dated 1 October 1937)

It is understood that the eleventh-hour hitch in connection with the formation of a coalition ministry by the Congress in this Province has been overcome by the creation of new offices of Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and others to placate the disaffected elements and to satisfy particular interests outside the ranks of the Congress party. But in this connection it is interesting to recall the recent pronouncement of Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that ministries cannot be created to satisfy special outside interest. The steps proposed, therefore, if sanctioned for the North-West Frontier Province by the High Command of the Congress, will apparently be in direct contravention of the much trumpeted principle of the Indian National Congress and though it is too early yet to say what will be its reactions on the intelligent sections of the Muslim and other communities, it is obvious that the Congress will be considered to have come down from its high pedestal and the prestige of the great organisation will naturally suffer.

28. Statement by Khan Bahadur S.M. Ismail, M.L.C., Bihar, on the incorrect reporting of the proceedings of a meeting (The Indian Nation, dated 1 October 1937)

Khan Bahadur S.M. Ismail, M.L.C., writes from Patna city:

"My attention has been drawn to the publication of an informal conversation that took place in a most informal way at an 'At Home' given by the Hon. Minister of Education at Regis Hotel in which he invited all the Muslim M.L.A.s and M.L.C.s and in which Babu Rajendra Prasad was also invited. Before commenting on the publication, I should like to know who was responsible for supplying the Press with the summary of our proceedings which was absolutely informal, friendly, and frank without in any way binding on any. If your informant is the Hon. Minister of Education himself or if it has come through him, I have no objection; but if it has come from any other quarter, I should like

to know as to who he is as I feel I am most incorrectly and insufficiently reported."

29. Extracts from Note by Gopinath Bardoloi on the situation in Assam

4. Formation of Coalition

Strength of Parties in the Assembly:

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| Congress | 31 |
| Surma Valley Hindus | 9 |
| Indian Commerce | 1 |
| United Peoples' | 9 |
| Tribal, Backward Lbr. | 14 |
| Europeans | 9 |
| Muslim League | 33 |
| Independent Muslim | 1 |

For all practical purposes, the Congress party can count upon the support of the Surma Valley Hindus (9), the Indian Commerce member (1), and the Independent Muslim (1).

In the last budget session, when the Muslim members had not yet united themselves into a communal group, the Leaguers and the United Muslim Party aligned themselves with the Congress party in defeating the Government on 11 occasions. Toward the fag end of the session, however, when the fate of the Ministers' Salary Bill was trembling in the balance, the ministry succeeded in breaking the morale of the Muslim League Party by means of baits, such as ministerships and fat salaries for members.

One Mr. Ansari, reputed to be connected with the late Dr. Ansari, came and helped combine all Muslims with one exception under the Muslim League.

The chance of appointing another Muslim minister is, however, remote and rupture among the members of the Muslim League is not improbable.

The United Peoples' Party: Sj. Rohini Kumar Chowdhury, an erstwhile Congressman, now a minister, is the leader of this party which is composed of Assam Valley Hindus. They are 9 in all.

Certain sections of public opinion are in favour of a coalition with this party.

Whether coalition is likely to be sanctioned by the Working Committee? And what are the conditions which must be fulfilled before the W.C. approves of it? If substantial agreement to work the Congress programme is sufficient? Any relaxation of the rule regarding ministers' salaries?

5. Line System

How the system came into existence. The Congress party's attitude. (For answer please see Report of Assembly Proceedings enclosed herewith.)

Responsibility of the Congress to give adequate protection to the tribal and backward communities who are in a minority and would be most adversely affected by the abolition of the system. Apprehensions of the general public that the indigenous population would be swamped if further immigration of hordes of Mymensinghias goes on unrestricted.

Reservation of land for expansion of the present population and for posterity. No objection to gradual immigration such as that of the garden labourers. The immigrants' move to remain as a separate entity. Leaders of immigrants resisting attempts at gradual absorption and making it a communal issue. Criminal propensities of the classes of people migrating from Eastern Bengal.

The Congress party's attitude in the light of the Karachi Resolution.

Difference within the Cabinet. The Line System Enquiry Committee a compromise. (For fuller details please see Report.)

6. Committees

The Congress party's participation in committees elected by the House and in those not so elected.

The resolution on revenue reduction and Government's action in setting up an Enquiry Committee against the wishes of the House. (Please see the Report.)

7. Supplementary demands

Law point regarding supplementary demands for those items which have been refused by the House.

G.N. Bardoloi
Leader, Congress Party, Assam

22-10-1937.

30. Press Statement by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati, President, Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha (20 November 1937)

I am pained to acknowledge that very little, almost nothing, has been done for the Kisans of Bihar in spite of our best efforts and their heart-rending cry. Sweet words and fine phraseologies won't bring them bread and land. Something material and concrete is badly needed. *Tamadi* suits must be stayed preparatory to the "generally wiping out of the arrears of the rent of previous years". It does not matter how and by whom it is done—be it either the Government or the Zamindars. But I know, and now it is certain, that Zamindars are not going to do so unless their hands are forced.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, great hopes have been created in the minds of the Kisans and various factors have contributed to them, recent elections being the mightiest of them. Call them false hopes if you dare and choose, and this has become rather a fashion especially of Zamindars now-a-days, but mind, that this

daring and this choice of yours are sure to be taken note of by the Kisans. Such are the signs of the time and the day will soon come—sooner than many imagine, and it has already once come very recently and passed—when you will be called upon to explain your conduct to their satisfaction, failing which the least they can do is to throw you overboard summarily. This is what the experience of ages and the history teach us.

These hopes are there not only because of the ceaseless and untiring struggle of the Kisan Sabha but also because of the Congress election manifesto and the agrarian programme adopted by it just on the eve of the elections and lakhs and lakhs of the copies whereof were broadcast in all the constituencies, and the Kisans were exhorted to vote solidly for the Congress candidates on the basis of the pledge contained in them. Those are the solemn declarations of the great national assembly, "the only well organised political party in the country", and they were reiterated by it successively at Karachi, Bombay and Faizpur. They are the results of the cool thinking of the best brains of the nation for so many consecutive years and the nation was forced by the circumstances to adopt them.

So if the Kisans are restive and impatient for their immediate fruition and consequently to judge you by your actions towards the realisation thereof, it is no fault of theirs. They will be very pleased, and rather grateful if, realising the forces of the time, the Zamindars voluntarily help them in this realisation. But in any case the Ministry is bound to do it. They must have it and you have no right to expect otherwise. They are not lawyers and politicians acquainted with the subtleties and difficulties of law and politics. They think straight and act straight. Hence they demand such dealings and they are perfectly entitled to it. Interpret the law for it if you can, change it if necessary. They have given you ample power and sanction and will give more when time comes and necessity arises.

Now the imperative demand of the Kisans to redeem those pledges without the least loss of time is but logical and necessitated by the circumstances staring them in the face and bent upon wiping them out of existence if there happens the slightest delay. These are the stern realities of the objective conditions obtaining in the Province. And if they are becoming nervous it is because they see that the Zamindars are most active and seen resorting to all sorts of manoeuvres to frustrate the cherished hopes of these tillers of the soil. In the past such manoeuvrings and false cries of "help! murder!" by the vested interests have invariably succeeded. Hence they are naturally afraid of their dangerous potentialities.

And if the Kisan Sabha shares their anxiety and nervousness and approves their attitude it is simply because no alternative has been left to it. We don't want to embarrass the Congress Ministry. But then we don't want to liquidate ourselves too. Throughout these years since the Sabha's coming into being ours has been the united front with the Congress in matters political and its wonderful success at polls has been partly due to our hearty cooperation and contribution, howsoever humble it might have been. Now when, as a result of it, the Congress has been in power very naturally creating hopes in the mass minds for the

immediate attainment of the demands of the Kisans and yet when they see unusual delay accompanied by uncertainty they are apt to find fault with us and the Kisan Sabha which claims to serve and represent them. And who can blame them for this? Therefore we find ourselves between two horns of dilemma and, to be frank, we are not ready to nullify our existence, liquidate the Sabha, and give the Kisans legitimate ground for suspicion about our claims and consequently to alienate them from it. They may rightly accuse us that we have betrayed them just at the moment by not pressing their demands boldly before the Ministry. Because of our united front and intimate connection with the Congress they believe that our voices are bound to be heard.

And what are those demands based on the Congress pledge? There is nothing radical in the immediate demands of the Kisans contained in the agrarian programme of the Congress and nothing in it is impossible of prompt attainment. Stopping of *tamadi* suits, wiping out of arrears of rent, liquidation of agrarian debts, and to that end an immediate declaration of moratorium, substantial reduction in rents and canal rates accompanied by the total stoppage of bribery in that department, abolition of *abwabs*, ill-paid, unpaid and forced labour, recognition of the B.P. Kisan Sabha, abolition of *salami* and certificate powers to Zamindars and a complete overhauling of the B.T. Act with a view to give the Kisans the very much needed relief—all these do not require much time and delay. The B.T. Amendment Bill prepared by the ministry to be introduced in the Assembly and to be made into law probably after three months hence falls miserably short of even the most pressing and immediate needs of the peasantry, and from the future programme of the ministry unpublished in the Press and made known to be introduced in the near future. Moreover, we of the Kisan Sabha have very legitimate grievances that we were not given an opportunity to place our viewpoint clearly before the preparation of the bill, and if there was any consultation, it was not specific at all.

We are aware of the difficulty of the ministers no doubt. But we want a solemn assurance and public declaration about the future programme of the ministry in unequivocal terms, so that we may be able to judge and ascertain the position in order to decide our future course of action which may not embarrass members as far as possible. We want to avoid any frictions with them realising that they are our men. And when about two-thirds of the Congress members of the assembly, 61 in number, have supported our demands by a requisition to the ministers, I don't see why they should feel any difficulty now. In the case of the Bihar Tenancy Amendment Bill I may say that we are ready not to disturb them provided we are assured that another comprehensive bill will soon be introduced, and before the preparation of that bill the provincial Kisan Sabha will be given a clear opportunity to place the demands of the Kisans. As we ourselves are not certain about what is happening and when, how can we assure the Kisans?

So much about the duties of the Congress M.L.A.s, ministers and the Zamindars. But this is not sufficient. Every demand must be backed by a resolute will to do and by some sanction. The Kisans have still to create that sanction and

prove their resolution and determination. I am glad they are awakened to the sense of their duty and it is not easy now to befool them as was the case heretofore. The demonstration of the 23rd August last and more than 2,000 meetings and demonstrations on the Kisan Day reiterating the demands of the Kisan Sabha are no doubt unmistakable proofs of their awakening and mighty upsurge. But after this they should not and must not be led into false belief that troubles are reaching their end. They should be always on the alert as eternal vigilance is the only guarantee for the attainment of what they are hankering after. And to bring about and maintain this vigilance we have decided to perform one thing in addition to the strengthening of the Kisan Sabha throughout the Province by enrolling lakhs and lakhs of its members.

When the assembly reopens some time in November next a mighty and striking demonstration of not less than a couple of lakhs of Kisans even from the remotest corners of the Province should be arranged. That demonstration must be perfectly orderly and peaceful. The Kisans will have to march on foot for many a day before the actual date of the demonstration in processions with banners and slogans so that they may be able to reach Patna latest early in the morning of the appointed day. That day and time, and place to begin the demonstration in Patna and other details will be published and made known later on.

Let us concentrate our whole energy on these points and the success will be ours.

31. *From Swami Sahajanand Saraswati to the President, Indian National Congress, Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad, regarding the ban imposed by the Champaran D.C.C. on participation by Congress workers in his tour programme*

THE BIHAR PROVINCIAL KISAN SABHA

Shri Sitaramashram
P.O. Bihta I.R.
(Patna)
28.11.37

Sir,

I am herewith sending a copy of the letter in Hindi, sent to me by the W.C. of the Champaran D.C.C., for perusal and necessary action. The content of the letter touches a fundamental question and goes against the very spirit of the Civil Liberties and Fundamental Rights of the citizens of the country. I learn from the Kisan workers there that all the Congress workers have been warned by the said Committee not to take part in my tour programme and if they still persist in their attempt then disciplinary action shall be taken against them. This attitude of that Committee has deliberately attempted to take away the right of organising Kisan

Sabhas from the Congress workers which has been granted to them by the Karachi and Faizpur resolutions of the Congress and also by the election manifesto and which has been reiterated by your statement of the 28th June '37. I learn from the papers that this letter has been sent to the Press and thus has been made public. The letter has been addressed to me officially as the President of the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha and if I am rightly informed there is a deliberate move in the Province to check and cripple the activities of the Kisan Sabha by applying the Congress machinery. It is, therefore, a very serious question and according to me touches the very foundation and well-being of the National Congress.

I, therefore, draw your pointed attention to the matter and request you to intervene very promptly before it gets very much complicated. Babu Bipin Bihari Varma, M.L.A., and Pandit Prajapati Mishra are the members of the W.C. of the B.P.C.C. and the former is also the President of Champaran D.C.C., and the latter a member of the W.C. of that D.C.C. Thus the situation becomes grave. I am also one of the members of the W.C. of the B.P.C.C. and also a member of the A.I.C.C. I hold that they have got no right to pass such a resolution. It is *ultra vires*. I have already informed Babu Rajendra Prasad, the President of the B.P.C.C., of it and have requested him to take necessary steps without delay.

Comradely yours,
Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
President, B.P.K. Sabha, and Member of the
A.I.C.C. and the W.C. of the B.P.C.C.

32. *From the Proprietor, Shree Nivas Estate, Sandha, to the Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, Patna, on the possibility of breach of peace as a result of speeches made by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati at Baruraj and other places*

Sandha
P.O. Mosipur
Muzaffarpur
9.12.37

Dear Sir,

I beg to request that the people of both the classes, the Zamindars and the tenants, of this locality of Baruraj Thana, District Muzaffarpur, are greatly alarmed due to the possibility of occurring breach of peace by the fiery speeches of Swami Sahajanand in meetings of Kisan Sabha at Baruraj and other places on the 6th instant, the detail of which is attached herewith. Further I beg to request that the matter had been referred to the local Thana and District Congress Committee too, but there being a party feeling amongst themselves, due to the

recent resignation of B. Thakur Ramnandan Sinha from the Presidentship of Muzaffarpur D.C.C., no heed was paid to the emergency of the situation.

So it has become necessary to move you for adequate measures to discontinue and check such meetings under the name of the Congress for future amity and peaceful living of the people of the locality.

We hope you would be pleased to take the immediate steps and oblige.

I have the honour to be
Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Sd.)
Prop., Shree Nivas Estate, Sandha

33. *From the Secretary, Saran District Congress Committee, to the Secretary, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee regarding speeches made by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati in Kisan Conferences and rallies*

SARAN DISTRICT CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Swaraj Ashram, Chapra
11-12-1937

Dear Sir,

I beg to draw your attention to the several speeches delivered by Swami Sahajanand Saraswati on various occasions in Kisan Conferences and rallies. At several places he condemned the Congress Ministry and the Congress M.L.A.s for not signing paper containing the Kisan demands. The attention of my D.C.C. has been drawn to his speeches on the occasions of Kisan rally at Patna and the Kisan Conference at Laheria Sarai. On both the occasions his speeches were full of incitement to violence by the Kisans which is against the Congress creed. His condemnations of the Congress Ministry, too, is against the Congress mandate. So the executive of the D.C.C. were compelled to issue a circular to Thana Committees for not associating and participating in his meeting which is only within the ambit of the District executives. Now, in Press and public this question is raised that when Swamiji is a member of the Executive Committee of the B.P.C.C., why the B.P.C.C. does not take any action against him and why District Committees do so which are not competent to do. Therefore, I request you to place the matter before the Working Committee and decide it finally, so that the position may be clarified.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.)
Secretary

34. *From Mahanth Haribhajan Das to President, Bihar Provincial Congress Committee, Patna, regarding violence perpetrated by Kisan Sabhaites*

16 Dec. 1937

PRESIDENT PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

SADAQUATASHRAM PATNA

KISANSABHAITES PREACHING VIOLENCE PADDY HARVESTING DESTROYED
RIOT APPREHENDED INSTRUCTION SOLICITED

MAHANTH HARIBHAJAN DAS
BENIPATTY DARBHANGA

35. *From Srinarain Thakur of Muzaffarpur District Congress Committee to the Provincial Congress Committee, Patna, regarding the activities of Kisan workers*

Muzaffarpur
22 December 1937

Sir,

I am herewith sending you a copy of the resolution adopted in the last meeting of the Working Committee of the Muzaffarpur District Congress Committee. Babu Sarju Prasad moved the above resolution in which he drew the attention of the Congress workers of the district to the importance of the resolution. There was some discussion as to the necessity of the resolution moved by Babu Sarju Prasad. Babu Kishori Prasanna Sinha objected to the resolution being considered, unless a large number of members were in favour of considering the same. Babu Kishori Prasanna Sinha, President of the Muzaffarpur District Kisan Sabha, then moved an amendment to the effect that the resolution of the Working Committee of the Provincial Congress Committee was a hasty one and there was a great resentment throughout the whole country over that resolution. Babu Awadheshwar Prasad Sinha, Secretary of the Bihar Provincial Kisan Sabha, who also happens to be a member of the Working Committee, endorsed the views of Babu Kishori Prasanna Sinha and said that the resolution was very important for them as they have to decide what course to adopt. He said that no violence was preached and supported Swamiji's theory to use Danda in case of self-defence. Babu Mahesh Prasad Sinha said that Swamiji's speech in Muzaffarpur town which was practically heard by almost all the members of the Working Committee was most reactionary as it attacked the basic principle of the Congress programme. He openly advocated the use of Danda and cited the examples that wherever it has been used by the tenants it has produced the desired effect. He asserted that Swami Sahajanandji had openly condemned the Congress and the Ministry for not acceding to the demands of the Kisan Sabha. Babu Deep Narayan Sinha, Babu Radha Mohan Sinha and Babu Jamuna

Tripathi and several other members supported the view expressed by Mahesh Babu and strongly supported the resolution. After some discussion the resolution of Babu Sarju Prasad was passed, only two voting against it. They were Babu Awadheshwar Prasad Sinha and Babu Kishori Prasanna Sinha. Dr. Ramasis Thakur remained neutral.

The members, while adopting the resolution of Babu Sarju Prasad, had in their view the situation prevailing in the district of Muzaffarpur. They are already acquainted with the reports received from the workers and Secretaries of several Congress Committees. It was believed that most of the Kisan workers in the district were attacking the Congress and the Ministry openly and were creating a spirit of lawlessness among the people to rise up against the Zamindars. The members evidently believed that it was an election move on behalf of the Kisan Sabha to capture the imagination of the people living in villages to go against the Congress which was adopting a policy of conciliation. Most of the members had also in view the letter of Babu Rajendra Prasad Sinha, Secretary of the Muzaffarpur District Kisan Sabha, addressed to Babu Mahesh Prasad Sinha which the latter had sent to this office for information and action which it thought proper. The original letter, addressed to Mahesh Babu, is enclosed herewith. It appears that in these resolutions regret has been expressed at the attitude of Mahesh Babu and Rameshwar Babu who refused to sign the application sent on behalf of 61 M.L.A.s to the Hon'ble Prime Minister demanding to introduce the Bihar Tenancy Amendment Bill. A similar letter was also addressed to Babu Brajnandan Sahi, another Congress M.L.A. from Paru. The activities of the Kisan Sabha in Hajipur were also in view. It was apparent that most of the responsible Kisan Sabha workers were instilling a spirit of disrespect for the Congress which was not desirable in the interest of the country.

Under these circumstances the resolution of Babu Sarju Prasad was adopted with the exception of two members, viz. Babu Kishori Prasanna Sinha and Babu Awadheshwar Pd. Sinha, voting against it. Babu Mathura Prasad Sinha remained neutral on the ground that the resolution adopted by the Working Committee of the P.C.C. was mandatory and, therefore, there was no necessity of adopting that resolution here. Dr. Ramasis Thakur also remained neutral.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
Srinarain Thakur
D.C.C., Muzaffarpur

36. Resolution passed by the District Congress Committee, Monghyr, requiring all its workers to dissociate themselves from the Kisan Sabha

The Working Committee of the Monghyr District Congress Committee passed the following resolution:

"Whereas it is becoming increasingly evident from the activities of the Kisan Sabha that its love for the Congress is limited only to the resolutions of its Provincial Council and whereas the speeches of its workers and their method of propaganda are proving detrimental to the policy, programme and prestige of the Congress, this District Congress Committee asks all its workers that they should dissociate themselves from Kisan Sabha and carry on all work relating to Kisans in the name of the Congress and from its platforms and in no case should they join in calling any meeting of the Kisan Sabha or participate in any way in meetings which may be organised by the workers of the Kisan Sabha."

It also resolved that disciplinary action should be taken against all those who may be found working contrary to the above resolution from today.

37. Circular issued by Kamal Rai, Secretary, District Congress Committee, Saran, to the Secretaries of all Thana Congress Committees asking them not to organise or attend meetings of Kisan Sabha

Dear Sir,

You are hereby informed that you should not organise any meeting in your Thana on the occasion of the visit of Swami Sahajanand. You will please also ask all Congress workers that they should not either organise or attend meetings of the Kisan Sabha. Cases of all those workers who fail to observe the instructions should be reported.

Yours sincerely,
Kamal Rai
Secretary, D.C.C., Saran

38. Decision by the Working Committee of the District Congress Committee, Saran, in regard to the tour of Swami Sahajanand Saraswati

After Swami Sahajanand Saraswati had finished his tour in the district of Saran, the Working Committee of the District Congress Committee decided as follows:

"According to the resolution of Shri Basudeonarayan Sinha it was decided to write to the Provincial Office protesting against the tour of Swami Sahajanand. The letter was drafted and passed by the Committee.

The Working Committee, while approving the action of the authorities of the District Congress Committee which they took in connection with the tour of Swami Sahajanand, is of the opinion that it was necessary."

39. *Resolution passed by the Champaran District Congress Committee asking Swami Sahajanand Saraswati to cancel his tour programme of the district*

25 December 1937

The Working Committee of the Champaran District Congress Committee passed the following resolution at its meeting on 19th November 1937:

"Resolved that a letter be written to Swami Sahajanand to the effect that inasmuch as it appears from speeches delivered by him at various places that a confusion in popular mind is growing in the masses and there are certain special reasons peculiar to the district of Champaran, there is danger of this confusion being greater here, the Working Committee requests him to cancel his tour programme of the district. The Working Committee also requests all its workers not to participate in any work in furtherance of his programme of meetings.

Resolved that the Bihar Provincial Congress Committee be informed of the above resolution for necessary action."

40. *Note by Jagashwar Prasad to the President, B.P.C.C., Patna, on the difficulties on account of Kisan Sabha and Congress organisations being under one and the same executives*

29-12-37

Kisan Sabhas began to be organised in Gaya district since the year 1932. When Congress was under a ban and almost all the workers were in jail, some people thought out to call meetings and organise the peasants under the name of Kisan Sabha. At the time when the Civil Disobedience movement was suspended the District Kisan Sabha was organised with some of the Congress workers as its executives. After the removal of the ban on Congress organisations, when the District Congress Committee was being organised, the Kisan Sabha workers with special efforts became executives of the Congress. Just at that time there was a split between two groups of workers—one having full faith in the present

leaders of the Congress and the other group who wanted to keep the Congress organisation under their control for advancing the cause of sectional or class organisation, viz. Kisan Sabha. But when, later, differences became acute the District Congress Committee was suspended and in the year 1935 Congress work was carried on through agents. In 1936, an attempt to reconcile two groups of workers was made and also with a view to keep in harmony with the Congress ideal the activities of all Congress workers, whether working for Congress or Kisan Sabha, by consent of all, Babu Anugrah Narain Sinha was made the President and Pandit Jadunandan Sharma the Secretary of the District Congress Committee. In the same year Pandit Jadunandan Sharma became the President of District Kisan Sabha. Soon, in 1936, Pandit Jadunandan Sharma occupied the position of Secretary of District Congress Committee and President of District Kisan Sabha. If the records of the District Congress Committee for 1936 are looked into, it will be clear that Pandit Jadunandan Sharma wholly occupied himself in Kisan Sabha organisation, without caring for Congress work. In 1937, Pandit Jadunandan Sharma became the President of District Congress Committee and Secretary of District Kisan Sabha, and Pandit Ramchandra Sharma, the President of District Kisan Sabha, became Secretary of the District Congress Committee. In the year 1937 also, hardly any meeting has been called or leaflets issued for Congress work. Although circulars from Provincial Congress Committees have been issued directing the District organisation to take up works for Muslim mass contact, Harijan uplift and village uplift, but no attention has been paid to them. The entire time and energy of both the President and Secretary of the District Congress Committee and also for some extent its funds are being used for Kisan Sabha organisation. Meetings are being organised and leaflets issued in the name of Kisan Sabha and they are being addressed by the President and Secretary of the District Congress Committee, and also by the Thana Congress workers, where the main slogan happens to be *Kisan Raj kaim ho*. Probably no meeting has been convened by Pandit Jadunandan Sharma in the name of the Congress during the years he has been functioning whether as Secretary or President of the District Congress Committee. In the meetings addressed by him and others under him, class hatred is openly preached.

Before the Congress Ministry was formed such activities and speeches were a bit restricted, but since the formation of the ministry these activities have increased very much. In several meetings, Pandit Jadunandan Sharnia is said to have asked people to come to meetings armed with *lathis* and *gandasas*. In Tehta Hisua and a few other places, he is said to have been taken in procession by people with *lathis* and *gandasas*. In speeches also, although trying to justify on grounds of self-defence, the President of the District Congress Committee is said to have asked people to use weapons against Zamindars or their agents. The people are said to have been further asked to take possession of *bakhast* lands. The direct or indirect result of such preaching has been that murders have been committed at several places and criminal cases for possession of *bakhast* lands

have cropped up in large numbers and the authorities have been forced to place special magistrate and police in several areas.

On 13.7.37 a meeting of the All-India Kisan Council was held at Neamatpur Ashram, which is the headquarters residence of the President of the District Congress Committee. In that connection public meetings were held on two or three days. At the meeting place, on seeing the tricolour national flag flying, Swami Sahajanand is said to have remarked in his first day's speech that he was sorry not to find there the red flag. The next day the national flag was taken down and the red flag hoisted and this was done at the instance of a member of the Working Committee of the Provincial Congress Committee, and under orders or with connivance of the President of the District Congress Committee.

On 12 December 1937 Swami Sahajanand came to Gaya town and he was taken in procession by the President of the District Congress Committee and other workers under him, headed by a big red flag, of course followed by national flags occupying inferior position.

Pandit Chandradip Sharma, President, Thana Congress Committee, Arwal, preached and made a regular and open propaganda in November last for boycott of all functions in connection with the visit of Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha, one of the ministers, and although this was brought to the notice of the executives of the District Congress Committee no action was taken by them.

During recent months, the President and one of the two Secretaries of the District Congress Committee have engaged themselves in carrying out open and secret propaganda personally and also through workers under them for undermining the prestige of the Congress Ministry and thereby the Congress itself. On 17.10.37, Kisan Day was observed and the President and the Secretary of District Congress Committee addressed meetings condemning the ministry. As pointed out previously all work that is being done in the district is being carried on in the name of Kisan Sabha by the persons who happen to be the President and the Secretary of the District Congress Committee and several Thana Congress Committees and at the same time along with general condemnation of the ministry, personal attacks against at least two ministers, viz. Babu Sri Krishna Sinha and Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha, are being made and they are being charged with insincerity and with having been won over by the Zamindars and sometimes they are even called as Zamindars' agents.

On 23 and 24 December 1937, Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha, Finance Minister, was to visit Tikari, Goh, Refigunj and other places. Some of the local Congress workers and Kisan workers of those places had arranged for his reception and different addresses on behalf of different organisations including one on behalf of the Thana Kisans were to be presented. Pandit Jadunandan Sharma, President, District Congress Committee, came to know of it and he got an address printed which was different from the one prepared by the local persons in charge and sent the same to the different places that were to be visited by Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha with a direction that the address sent by him was to be presented on behalf of Kisans. A copy of the proposed address is

attached and it will speak for itself, and it will further speak whether a President of a District Congress Committee is justified in forcing such addresses on the people to be presented to Congress Ministers.

To sum up, if the Congress organisation is to function as a national organisation with its prestige intact, it is absolutely necessary that only those persons who believe in all sincerity and honesty in its ideals and methods should be allowed to work as its executives in different District and Thana Committees. Kisan Sabha workers or workers of other organisations, who believe in the establishment of Kisan Raj or Majdoor Raj, who believe in fostering class war, who believe and propagate that Zamindari should be abolished without compensation even in face of Karachi Resolution, who do not restrict and confine themselves and their activities within non-violent and constitutional means, and who utilise their position as Congress executives for keeping the Congress in the background and for discrediting and undermining its prestige, should not be allowed to be executives of any Congress organisation. There is already a bar against persons belonging to communal organisations and they cannot become executives or members of Executive Committees of the Congress. The same principle ought to be extended in cases of sectional or class organisations. And in order to safeguard and look after the interests of different classes, sub-committees such as Kisan Sub-Committee, Agricultural Labour Sub-Committee and Industrial Labour Sub-Committee and the like should be formed under the Congress. The result will be that work will be coordinated, division amongst workers will be stopped, and the Congress organisation as a national organisation will be able to maintain its character and prestige.

Jagashwar Prasad

Enclosure not included.

41. *From Shah Omar, a Muslim Congress leader of Bihar, on the worsening situation in Arwal Thana and Jehanabad subdivision on account of Kisan Sabha activities*

Arwal
December 1937

My dear Sir,

I regret to mention some of the facts which have been prevailing in the Arwal Thana and the Jehanabad sub-division (Gaya) as a result of the Kisan Sabha activities. I stand...to bring to your notice the ways of the workers who are none the less Congress workers and some of them responsible executives of the District, Subdivisional & Thana Congress Committees. We, as Congressmen, find ourselves in a strange fix where the names and actions of the Congress

organisation and our revered Congress leaders are openly denounced and disrespected by the Congress workers who are out for Kisan Sabha work.

In the open meeting at Village Khaira, Thana Arwal, in November last, Swami Sahajanand asked the kisans to be fully equipped and armed with instruments to meet the Zamindars and pay the Zamindars in terms of blows instead of anything else. Mr. Chandardip Singh, President, Thana Congress Committee, went round the Bambhai Village and there he gave open challenge to the Zamindars that he will come next morning with 1,200 volunteers and get every brick of their walls and...of their roof shattered by force. The same Chandardip Singh, President, Arwal Thana Congress Committee, openly roused the tenants of village Ladipur Koil and Saranti etc. to violence and take forceful possession of the *bakhasi* and sold lands, in the month of December. As a result, open rioting broke out and several persons are still lying in the Arwal dispensary as injured patients, and lots of cases are still pending on.

I am simply ashamed to add that the Congress flag is being humiliated, so much so that spears and *guptis* are used by the Kisan workers as sticks to carry flags on.

The other day Pt. Jadunandan Sharma, President, District Congress Committee, openly and most violently exhorted the kisan audience to attend meetings armed with spears, swords and lathis thenceforward and consider it their creed that the kisans have to teach lessons to the Zamindars through their Danda force.

Congress organisation is openly represented by them as "*prostitute organisation*" which is meant for everybody and not only for kisans.

On the 12th December, Swami Sahajanand held a meeting at Gaya and came in procession from Gaya station to the town in a way obviously disrespecting the Congress flag, having red flags on big high posts and few Congress flags too low under the red ones in his front. Although people felt awfully disgusted at this attitude and only 50 or 60 persons joined this so-called procession, yet that left a mark of disrespect to Congress flag and love for red one by him.

In the park meeting, he openly criticised the Ministry for their prohibition programme and encouraged the kisans to disregard prohibition programme inasmuch as *tea is more injurious*.

In short, I am unable to enumerate the hundreds and thousands of facts of violence, disrespect and bad names to Cengress organisation given by the so-called Congressmen or Kisan workers in our district without any check to their growing outburst against all the respected leaders of the Congress.

If I may be pardoned and may not be misunderstood, I beg to assure you that the rapid progress of the Muslim League activities at least in one district is more due to the Kisan working than anything else. At least I am able to say in all confidence that my subdivision and my own thana would have been the last victim of Muslim League had there been a little restraint in the preaching and practising of disharmony created in the way of Musalman petty Zamindars. I know, for instance, that at village Bhadasi the Kisan workers stopped the necessary

marketing on the *tehwar* day of Shobrat against all the Musalman Zamindars by throwing challenge to Musalmans of Bhadasi village as to how they would get their required articles from Bazar and how they would celebrate their festival. This and many more instances of total recklessness caused immense agitation among the Musalmans of the locality and I can say with certainty, though not without the highest degree of pain, that such things made easy sailing for the Muslim Leaguers in the district. Had the workers of Kisan Sabha not been the workers and members of the Congress, things would have been very safely defended. But, unfortunately, Congress had to be misunderstood among the Musalman and Hindu masses, being misrepresented by the Kisan activities. These few words I am going to state in utter disappointment and haste and I hope to substantiate more than what is stated here if matters are dealt with. I approach you with all respects to take these things into your serious consideration. Otherwise the Congress workers will be, with lost respects, nowhere.

I am,
Yours affectionately
Shah Omar

42. Suggestions made by J.C. Kumarappa¹ for promotion of village industries

Dec. 1937

1. Paper can be made from all kinds of village waste such as old palmyra thatching, rags, jute waste, cotton stalk, etc. This industry can be introduced in all jails and aided schools. Immediately we have very few trained men available but if Government takes it up, the needed training can be obtained easily. If Government departments alone make it a point of using only such hand-made paper all jails can be kept busy supplying their needs.

2. Oil pressing by ghannis can also be introduced in jails. There is a considerable demand for pure ghani-pressed oil. The local types of ghani require improvements but these can easily be done. Oilmen should also be taught the art of ghani-making and repairing. Mill-pressed oil may be taxed to protect the village producer. This may be done by licensing of mills.

3. Another industry that needs revival is pottery. The art has to be improved. Considerable work has been done in Government Schools of Art but these methods have not reached the villages. This industry can be taught in jails also. Government buildings may use jail-made bricks, tiles, pipes, etc.

4. Soap-making is a simple industry where soda carbonate in the form of *sajimati* is locally available. I understand that the seaweeds, along Madras coast, when brunt, supply ash which is a good source of alkalis needed, and which weed is so abundant as to supply the needs of all soap makers of the world.

5. It is not necessary to mention the textiles here—both cotton and woollen—

but the production of the needed raw materials has to be controlled. Mills are only interested in large-scale growers. We need to help only small growers of cotton. Sheep rearing needs a great deal of help from the Government to improve the quality of wool by cross-breeding and shearing, sorting and grading. If this service can be rendered then blanket weaving can be improved and woollen cloth making can also be introduced along with felt making and carpet making.

6. Country tanning is suffering for lack of technical knowledge. Government may help in providing facilities for collecting the bark from the jungles and forests and spreading up-to-date methods of tanning. At present all influence is directed towards helping large factories, and large quantities of hides are being exported. Where it is not done so, salt may be given free of duty. Other by-products such as glue-making, horn work, brush-making, may also be taught in jails.

7. Rice mills are causing damage to the health of the people. These should be subjected to strict regulation by systematic licensing; so also oil mills.

8. Gur-making should be helped by excise laws being relaxed to enable tapping for sweet toddy from the palms.

9. Money crops such as sugar-cane, groundnut, cotton, tobacco, etc. should be regulated to protect the grower from the exploitation of the factory owner. Wherever possible, regulatory taxation should be imposed to enable the raw material to be worked on and converted into a finished article locally or as near to the source as practicable. (As we are situated today it may not be possible to shape railway freight rates to help in this direction but licensing and local taxes may be used.)

10. Where palmyra trees are abundant, street-brush-making may be taught in jails. Municipalities can be supplied with such locally made brushes.

11. Forest laws should be amended to help grazing, bee-keeping, and provision of fuel.

12. Other local industries may be surveyed and helped.

13. Economic survey of each village should be undertaken periodically (say, once in five years).

14. The annual receipts and payments on Government account for each village should be posted up in village *chavadi*.

15. Industries like dairying, lac culture, sericulture, bee-keeping, etc. may be helped by Government demonstration centres.

16. Whatever literature is available on experiments already carried out by Government Departments should be translated in Hindi and in the vernaculars and distributed at a very nominal price. At present many of these are only to be found in the archives of the experimental stations and the public is not even aware of them. Even in English, copies are not procurable easily.

17. Some of the above industries as well as simple cottage industries like making of ropes, mats, baskets, shoes, may be introduced as part of the curriculum of all aided schools.

¹A social worker, committed to promoting village industries.

43. Circular letter from Jawaharlal Nehru on the use of flags at Congress meetings

ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

References are sometimes made to us about the use of the Red Flag at Congress meetings. Occasionally, unseemly incidents have also taken place in this connection. I have previously expressed myself in public whenever such an incident has taken place but I should like to make the position clear for the guidance of Congressmen.

The Red Flag has for a hundred years or more been the flag of the workers all over the world and nearly all workers' organisations have adopted it in various countries. It represents the struggles and sacrifices of the workers and is entitled to our respect; and a workers' organisation, if it so chooses, has every right to display it at its functions.

But so far as the Congress is concerned, our flag is the national tricolour. During its short life of half a generation it has already become a symbol to us all, including workers and peasants, of freedom and national unity and solidarity. It represents, as nothing else does, the spirit of the Indian people striving for freedom and the honour of the nation. And because of that so many of our comrades have braved suffering and prison for the sake of that flag. In remote villages, we find that flag displayed and the sight of it gives courage and hope to the poor downtrodden villagers. That flag has become wrapped up in our minds with so much that we value, so much that we hope for, that any courtesy to that flag hurts us vitally and we resent the insult to the nation's honour. We cannot tolerate any such courtesy or insult from whomsoever it might come.

For the Congress this is the only flag, and on all Congress functions it is this flag which must be displayed. Between it and the Red Flag and any other flag there can be or should be no rivalry. If workers' organisations join a Congress procession or a Congress meeting, it is open to them to have their own flag or banners. But any such flag must not dominate the scene or seek equality at such functions with the National Flag. At all Congress functions it is the National Flag that must dominate the scene. I trust that these directions will be borne in mind by all and no one will countenance any act which may be construed as lessening the honour and dignity and importance of a flag that has become so dear to us during these many years of struggle and conflict.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44 Copy of letter dated Ranchi the 3rd October 1938, written to A.V. Thakkar by Kshitish Chandra Basu¹

"I am glad to receive your letter of the 31st. The report in the *Advance* is an exaggerated report; not only that, it is meant to suppress facts.

There has been some awakening no doubt amongst the Oraons and Mundas of Chhotanagpur; but that is a political awakening. They have organised themselves in the name 'Adibashi Sabha', opened the central office at Church Road, Ranchi, and started a fortnightly in Hindi known as '*Adibashi*'. All this is to separate Chhotanagpur from Bihar. They are making other demands also, but the first and foremost of them is the separation. They have started branch committees in Singhbhum and Palamau. *The missionaries are backing them; some influential Bengalis are said to have been backing them.*

Babu Jagatnarain Lal, in a meeting at Lohardaga, while replying to one Christian aboriginal speaker's allegation against the Congress Govt., said that Sanatan Adibashis should not listen to one who has sacrificed his own religion; he can sacrifice anything. He has also asked some to organise a Sanatan Adibashi Sabha. But this work has not been undertaken by any as yet.

It is reported that the Missionary Fathers, on hearing the report of Sjt. Jagat Narain Lal's speech, were furious and gave a challenge (in private) to the Congressites, in front of the Oraons. It is also without any definite proof.

However it is a bare fact and sheer truth that the aborigines have combined, *both Christians and non-Christians*, to fight the Congress Ministry.

I brought the Education Minister, the Premier and Sjt. Juglal Choudhury and Anugrah Babu to my Ashram and wanted money for completing the building. So far I have got only a promise of Rs.250 from Sjt. Juglal Choudhury. I expect something from others also."

Copy forwarded to Rajen Babu, Sadaquat Ashram, Digha Ghat, Patna, for information.

Delhi 7th Nov. 1938

A.V. Thakkar

¹Secretary to Rabindranath Tagore.

45. *From the Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, Jammu and Kashmir State, on the political situation in the State*

Jammu
December 1938

With reference to the statements issued in the Press regarding the recent events in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the publicity that has been and is being given to them in British India, I wish to bring to your notice certain matters which those of us who live in the State and are conversant with the affairs of the State feel are being concealed from you. Before dealing with the subject matter of my letter, I should like to introduce myself to you. I am an elected Member of the

State Legislative Assembly and the leader of the biggest non-official group in it, that is to say, I am the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly. My group comprises Hindus including Harijans, Muslims and Sikh Members in the Assembly. By profession I am an agriculturist and a landowner belonging to the Province of Jammu and Kashmir and come of a family of agriculturists and landowners.

As regards the reasons which have induced me to address you, I wish to say that the recent reports in the Press, which may be right or wrong, state that certain persons who are wanted by the police in the State and have run away from the State for fear of being arrested are issuing statements purporting to be the substance of their talks with you in which they state that they explained the miserable conditions of the people of the State who are striving for a responsible government and that you have given them promises or assurance of your sympathy and help in their so-called struggle for freedom and that you are likely to issue your statement to this effect shortly. The true position in the State has been more than once made clear by statements issued in the *Tribune* under Professor Gulshan Rai's signature and other similar statements and the history of agitation in the State is still fresh in the minds of outside public as well as inside public.

The Muslim Conference which came into being after the agitation was carrying on agitation on identical lines till the present agitation. Seeing that the present Government means business, the leaders came forward in different roles and began to preach nationalism on their own account without taking into confidence the minorities who live in the State always in great harassment of the major community. Even this movement has not received any support from the Muslim community. The so-called present national agitation in Srinagar started in sympathy with a Muslim agitator who delivered a seditious speech against the Government for which he was tried and convicted, which conviction was upheld by the State High Court. On this meetings were held throughout which became violent. The Prime Minister's car was attacked and an attempt was made to murder him. Hooliganism and vilification were the order of the day. The few Hindus who joined this agitation were a few Kashmiri Pandits who had their own axes to grind against their own community. These non-Muslims have been repeatedly disowned by their communities. All responsible organisations in the State know that the agitation was started by the Muslim Conference for its own ends and that the Hindus and Sikhs as communities had no part in it because they knew the tactics of the Muslim Conference which was being backed by the Muslim League in India, with the object of building up a solid Muslim block all over North-West India. In point of fact Muslim League workers were with the agitators. After the agitation had subsided, and I must bring it to your kind notice that the agitation did not last more than a few days because the people as soon as they learnt that the Government meant business on this occasion and refused to be cowed down by the threats of the agitators, most of whom were arrested, and those few of them who escaped the law by absconding into the

British territory started writing articles in the Press in the Punjab and actually have issued printed posters in the State inciting the Muslims to rise in rebellion against the State Government. These posters are in our hands and are signed by Ghulam Mohd. Bakshi who poses as a nationalist leader and has, as it appears from the Press reports, interviewed you. So much for the non-violent and nationalistic character of the agitation.

As regards the question whether we, that is, the Hindus and Sikhs and the moderate elements amongst Muslims do not want responsible Government, of course there can be only one reply to it. We do want it. People who have the interests of the country at heart and have a stake in the country naturally want to have the control of their destinies in their own hands, but the point is how we can approach that very important problem in which not only the extremists, who exploit and are exploited by interested parties inside and outside the State, are concerned but also those who form the real backbone of the State, the agriculturists and the professional classes, Hindus and Muslims. Our experience of the past seven years has been that the Muslim Conference led by the agitators have adopted the most unreasonable attitude and wherever a question of principle has arisen with regard to the preservation of the rights and position of the minorities they have tried and in a large measure succeeded in destroying those rights. The State Government until last year, for reasons which it is not necessary to enter into here, has always acceded to the wishes of the Muslim Conference, however unreasonable they might be. So far as the interests are purely economic there is no difference between the Hindu and Muslim agriculturists and Hindu and Muslim non-agriculturists, but where the dividing line is based not on economic grounds but on purely religious grounds the position of the minorities becomes impossible in the State. For four years we have had the Legislative Assembly in the State. It has done useful work. It has extensive powers on the lines of Minto-Morley reforms and in some respects it is more advanced than the Legislative Council Assembly of Mysore State. What we minorities and the moderate people of all communities desire is that instead of being thrown to the wolves, we should progress step by step towards responsible Government. Today, though the Government is not responsible to the Assembly, the Government is definitely responsible in the sense that we can make it very hot for the administration in the Assembly if we find that they have made a mistake and there have been several such instances. Unless the majority community and the extremists amongst them learn to behave with moderation and tolerance towards others who, though fewer in number, are not only good subjects of the State but have for other reasons a much greater interest and stake in the welfare of the State, it is impossible for the minorities to accept the position of permanent subservience and servility to the majority community. I would, therefore, request you either to visit the State personally or through an emissary of yours and study political conditions of the people and find out yourself what Government would suit the people, and what time is needed to prepare ground for responsible Government. There is nothing to conceal. You can see what the condition of the

people is.

My suggestion to you would be that before you give any kind of assurance to the class of people represented by Ghulam Mohd. Bakhshi and P.N. Dhar—the latter entirely unknown in the State, and the former known mainly as a protagonist of the Muslim Conference—or issue any statement regarding Kashmir State you should study the political conditions of the communities and see for yourself whether there exists ground for the establishment of responsible Government in the State. Your advice in the matter will be welcome.

If you want any further information on any point that may require further elucidation I shall be only too happy to comply with your wishes.

46. *The Case of Detenue Narayan Chandra Lahiri*

Sj. Narayan Lahiri, formerly of the All-Bengal Students' Association and the Managing Editor, *Chhatra*, was detained in jail since December '32. While in jail, he was suffering from various ailments and those were diagnosed by different doctors at different times, e.g. gastritis, diverticulosis, intestinal stesis, appendicitis, etc. He was under the treatment of Lt. Col. M.A. Singh, Lt. Col. M. Das, Lt. Col. Vere-Hodge, Major Katariya, Capt. Sandhu, Capt. Montgomery, all I.M.S. Officers, and Dr. L.M. Banerji, Capt. P. Ganguly, Dr. D.C. Chakrabarty, Dr. A.C. Mazumdar, etc. He had been an indoor patient for more than 3 long years, and had lost 50 lbs. in weight. When all treatment failed, Narayan Babu and his relations outside moved the Government for sanction of treatment by Drs. B.C. Roy, Sir Nil Ratan Sircar, A.C. Roy Choudhury and Kaviraj Pramatha Roy of the Natore Raj family but this was not granted. Eminent doctors like Col. Vere-Hodge, I.M.S., Dr. L.M. Banerji, Dr. D.C. Chakrabarty and Capt. Ganguly, all had strongly recommended him for change of climate and environment. The Government orders took shape in the form of village domicile, transfer to Deoli or Buxar etc. The recommendations were further strengthened by the presence of bronchitis, slow fever, pain in chest, night-sweats, loss of weight, etc., and those complications were of such nature that Capt. Ganguly, in Sept. '36 and Dec. '36, strongly asked the authorities to take immediate steps to remove him to a change (Purulia, Ranchi, Hazaribagh, etc. were suggested), otherwise the delay would bring further mischief to his damaged lungs. But nothing happened. Mr. N.K. Bose, Advocate, Ex-M.L.C., then moved some questions in the Bengal Council and urged the Home Member to act accordingly and the latter assured the House in the same strain. There were also vigorous movements afoot in the Press, through the Civil Liberties and in the columns of *Advance*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, which forced the Govt. to move a little.

The relations of Narayan Babu wanted him to be exonerated in Behar, Madras, U.P. or Assam and the Govt. informed later that the Govts. of Behar and Madras

had refused permission for the same. So the Govt., through I.B., asked Narayan Babu to put some proposals for their consideration. Accordingly the following were submitted: (a) Externment at Govt. cost in U.P., Madras, etc., (b) Internment at Kurseong (Darjeeling) with sufficient allowance to meet the local expenses; and (c) if above were not possible then internment at Calcutta, with the minimum allowance of Rs.50, and with the proviso that in case the doctors asked him to go to a change, the Govt. would have to arrange that. It should be remembered here that the doctors were against the proposal of stay in Calcutta, in consideration of his health.

The Government accepted the last proposal and Narayan Babu was interned in Calcutta in March '37 last. He received the permission of the Govt. to get treatment by Dr. Bidhan Ch. Roy, Dr. B.N. Dey, Capt. P. Ganguly, etc. and he was receiving the same from Dr. Roy and Dr. Dey from clinical and other examinations by them. Dr. Roy was of the opinion that the patient was suffering from septic tonsilitis, appendicitis, gastritis, pleurisy and bronchitis (chronic). Since his internment, he gained 3 lbs. in weight but with the aggravated condition of pleurisy and bronchitis he had lost 7 lbs. since. Dr. Roy had advised him to go to a change, otherwise it was sure that his lungs would be further affected. So, accordingly, Narayan Babu had sent two petitions to the Govt. through the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Special Branch, on 10.6.37 and 1.7.37 but no reply had been received yet. The delay and the gradual deterioration of his health are giving fresh troubles to his relations.

It may be noted here that during his detention his father had died and so he is helpless now. He has been made an invalid and wreck, due to long detention and illness. In our considered opinion, proper treatment was not given to him at the proper time and when the attention was given to that direction, the recommendations of the doctors whose services were requisitioned by the Govt. themselves were not given effect to. What was the good if the Govt. were determined not to take notice of these notes of the doctors? If proper attentions were given, then surely he would not have suffered in this way. The apathetic and negligent dealings were mainly and entirely responsible for his state of health. He is a complete ruin and we ask the authorities to fulfil their own promise and save the life from untimely death which, we are sure, will follow if actions are not taken immediately. No question of favour, but the sense of duty demands it. If the authorities have pleasure to detain persons in jail, without any rhyme or reason, they should have the generosity and big heart to swallow the bitter pills they have brought out of that policy.

Since, a reply has been communicated to Sj. Narayan Lahiri on 27.7.37 to the effect that the Bengal Govt. would not take the trouble to send him to a dry-climatic change outside the Province of Bengal and if they conceded at all then no allowance would be granted. He has also been informed that the restrictions imposed on him would not be relaxed and that he might choose to go anywhere in Bengal. In that case his present allowance of Rs.50 would be continued. It is a strange proposal. Now the Govt. was shifting from their original ground and we

want the Govt. to carry out thier own promises and thus save the life, for which condition the repressive policy of the Govt. was entirely responsible.

Sj. Narayan Lahiri, on receiving these communications, had sent petitions to Mr. J.R. Blair, Home Secretary, for reconsideration and also asked personal interviews with him, and S.B. and I.B. authorities with a view to put before them all the logical and relevant points, which might help the concerned to change their mind.

Had interviews with Mr. Blair and the order was issued, as a result of that interview, allowing him to proceed to [Giridih] for change. Order for extermnent from Bengal in order to enable him to stay at [Giridih] was issued by the Govt. of Bengal on 8th Oct. 1937. The Addl. Deputy Secretary said that he (the detenu) would not be allowed to go anywhere except [Giridih] without the permission of the Behar Government. So, petition had been sent to the Prime Minister, Behar, for permission to move freely within the Province....

(True copy of the Order)

Government of Bengal
Political (Special)
Memorandum
No. 44863 X

Calcutta, 8th Oct. 1937

Babu Surendra Prasad Lahiri is informed with reference to his petitions dated the 13th and 15th September 1937 that orders have issued to enable his brother, detenu Babu Narayan Chandra Lahiri to leave the Province of Bengal in order to reside at Giridih.

J.N. Talukdar
Addl. Dy. Secy.
to the Govt. of Bengal

47. *From Dr. Satyapal, President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, questioning the advisability of Congress participation in the Unity Conference organised by Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan*

PUNJAB PROVINCIAL CONGRESS COMMITTEE

Dear Sir,

I very much hesitate to encroach on your valuable time but as the matter I intend to place before you is of a serious nature I would like to acquaint you with the following points with a view to seek your guidance. It was some time back that Dr. Gopi Chand wrote to me from Simla that as Sir Sikandar was not personally known to me he had authorised Dr. Gopi Chand to sound my views as

to whether I would attend the Unity Conference to be organised by Sir Sikandar. To this I sent a reply that I had no faith in this Unity Conference as it was being organised by the Premier whose hostility towards the Congress is so very evident and a further proof of which had been afforded by the adoption of undesirable tactics to defeat a Mohammadan Congress candidate in opposition to M. Zaffar Ali Khan who is a rank communalist, who is always anxious to harm the Congress and remains actively engaged in creating inter-communal dissensions: I thought that the real motives of Sir Sikandar to organise this Conference which, as later events clearly proved, were to enhance the prestige of his party and ministry and also to divert the attention of the people from the nefarious deeds of officials who are in reality responsible for all this bloodshed. After having stated my reasons for not joining the Conference I also wrote in that letter of mine that Dr. Gopi Chand was quite competent to place the Congress view. I then thought that this Conference was also a part of the Parliamentary activities. Moreover, Dr. Gopi Chand's conveying to me the invitation of Sir Sikander was a clear indication that Dr. Gopi Chand had decided to join this Conference. Sir Sikandar sent me an invitation by wire. I refused to attend the Conference and my principal reasons for this refusal have been stated above. I have no faith in the present ministry, Sir Sikandar, and the Unionist Party, and I am extremely suspicious about all their professions and deeds even if apparently they are harmless or appear beneficial to an unwary eye. This Conference, as Sir Sikandar now says, has been invited by him as a Punjabee and not as a Premier. I entirely disbelieve this. If Sir Sikandar be divested of his official authority he has no status to his calling this Conference. This right does not accrue to every Punjabee to call such a Conference which affects the interests of millions of people.

When I found that Sir Sikandar wishes to exploit this Conference to become popular among the masses I warned the people of the Punjab against this camouflage.

Meanwhile Dr. Gopi Chand, without writing to me again or without consulting me, actively participated in the Conference and proceeded to Wardha to take the sanction of the Working Committee. I have no knowledge of the resolution passed by the Working Committee on this subject. I think none exists; in any case, none has been published in papers nor supplied to me. Moreover if the Working Committee would have deemed this matter of such an importance as to necessitate a resolution of the Working Committee thereon, I would certainly have been given a chance to place my viewpoint before it gave its verdict one way or the other. Anyway it was published in papers that the High Command had authorised Dr. Gopi Chand to attend the Conference. I may here say that I have reasons to believe that Dr. Gopi Chand was communicating to Sir Sikandar all that was happening between him and the Working Committee and also between him and me.

He showed my letter to Sir Sikandar without my permission and it is believed here that he has proceeded to Wardha at the suggestion of Sir Sikandar and he reported to him all that happened at Wardha.

This has encouraged Sir Sikandar to drive a wedge in the Congress. Lately he

made a statement full of fulminations and abuses against me. He called me unpatriotic, anti-national, unsportsmanlike, and so on. He dubs me as a public enemy, against inter-communal unity, and characterises my opposition to this Unity Conference as cutting my nose to spite my face. He threatens me with his sword. This speech is extremely offensive and is a direct insult to the Congress. A storm of indignation has arisen against this speech in a very clear manner. People expected a statement from Dr. Gopi Chand. As he did not share the indignation of the people, he was rather pleased with it because he was praised and I was condemned, he was exalted and I was censured. He did not issue any statement for several days. And at last when he made a statement it is very halting and extremely disappointing. But with that I am not concerned. I can give a battle to Sir Sikandar without any help from Dr. Gopi Chand. I published a statement which has been liked by one and all. What I wish to place before you is this that he has very much praised this Conference and condemned me for opposing it.

Now the position is this that if you support this Conference it is a vote of confidence in Sir Sikandar and his party to whom you give credit for promoting inter-communal unity which it does not mean to do. I may say that if we are unable to arouse the masses by exposing the tactics of the Unionist Party we will not be able to break this party and, without breaking it, we can't expect any Congress Ministry in our Province.

Moreover, Master Tara Singh has refused to accept the decisions of this Conference because he believes that it has no sanction behind it. It is packed with Sir Sikandar's lieutenants and sycophants and nobody has any faith in this. For example, one of the members is R.S.L. Ram Jawaya Kapur who was defeated by a Congress candidate in Assembly elections in 1937.

Political questions have been shelved because Sir Sikandar cannot solve them. These are very difficult to tackle.

There are three communities in our Province and so far no formula has been devised which can please them all.

If prominent Congress leaders have failed, how can Sir Sikandar, who is at once a communalist and reactionary, succeed?

Sir Sikandar's ministry is against the Congress and is trying to harm it in more than one way. I shall cite a few instances:

- (i) It has not accepted a single recommendation of the Opposition Party.
- (ii) It has not released political prisoners except a very few.
- (iii) It has started cases against Congress leaders specially Mohammadans and Sikhs. So far five or six cases are going on. It has started a case against Bibi Ghulam Fatma, a prominent Congress preacher. It has arrested Baba Kharak Singh, a prominent Sikh leader.
- (iv) The attitude of the police is worse. Surveillance of political leaders is there. Only a few days ago it assaulted mercilessly on those who had gone to make a demonstration against Sir Chhotu Ram who has specialised himself in abusing Congress and its followers. He publicly apologised for all that he had said but now he has started again. He is a bitter enemy of the Congress and, day in and day out, he carries on a violent campaign against the Congress and non-

agriculturists. There are heaps of other instances to prove the anti-national character of this Ministry.

My request is this that if you will support this Conference the Congress prestige in this province will go to dogs. He uses offensive language against me as President of the P.P.C.C.; he prosecutes Congressmen; he does not mind their being mercilessly beaten and if even with all this we credit him with a desire to promote unity this means a death blow to the Congress in this Province. Dr. Gopi Chand praises him, regards him as an embodiment of all noble qualities and cooperates with him to such an extent in all matters that a general impression exists that they work in consonance and harmony. Sir Sikandar praises Dr. Gopi Chand in order to give an impression that he respects those Congressmen who sing to his tune and speaks ill of all those who have the courage to differ from him.

I feel that the Congress should express its indignation by asking Dr. Gopi Chand to withdraw on the following grounds: (i) The Conference is not representative in its character; (ii) Master Tara Singh has proclaimed that he will have nothing to do with this Conference; (iii) Repressive policy of this Government; and (iv) His relentless campaign against the Congress.

Dr. Gopi Chand does not recognise the P.P.C.C.. He openly defies and intentionally insults it. His one aim is to humiliate me and the P.P.C.C. and I have reasons to believe that Sir Sikandar could not have dared to insult me and the P.P.C.C. if he had not the support of Dr. Gopi Chand who had given him an impression that the High Command of the Congress is in favour of Dr. Gopi Chand and would certainly let me down. This erroneous impression of Sir Sikandar should go. It is not proper that Dr. Gopi Chand should have communicated to Sir Sikandar the views of the members of the Working Committee.

I offer my apologies for such a lengthy letter. I have curtailed it as much as I could. There are scores of other points which should be placed before you, but I shall refrain from doing so at least today. I shall very much wish to have your guidance but I must say this that if in this controversy Sir Sikandar and his Unity Conference are not condemned the natural result would be a tide in favour of his Ministry and this of course is extremely detrimental to our interests.

Moreover, all the Congress Committees and Sikhs have condemned this Conference and if it gets blessing from you, Sir Sikandar will score a point and people will begin to say that he is the right man to hold the office and all those who oppose him are unpatriotic and anti-national. It will be difficult to carry on the Congress work in this Province and I at least will have no heart to serve the Congress in these circumstances.

I offer apologies for the length of the letter but as this matter is of more than ordinary importance I hope you won't mind the inconvenience caused to you.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Satyapal

Sir Sikandar has publicly withdrawn his remarks against me.

48. *Speech by the Prime Minister of North-West Frontier Province in the Legislative Assembly on the eve of tendering his ministry's resignation*

The expected has come to pass and we are not at all surprised at what has happened.

The question of establishing a stable ministry came to the forefront immediately after the elections were over and has defied solution ever since. The question has engaged and I suppose is still engaging the serious attention of officials and non-officials both inside and outside the Assembly and even of the man in the street.

The present ministry came into being, it seems, under the influence of a very inauspicious star, thanks mainly to the factious mentality of the Frontier people as is evidenced from the presence of about half a dozen parties in a House of fifty. The ministry embarked on its arduous task with a genuine desire for the general amelioration of the condition of the people of this Province and I dare say that in spite of the many obstacles in our way and the want of funds we can look back with pardonable pride on what we have been able to achieve. Our task was thankless but nothing undaunted we tried our best to do what was possible under our unenviable circumstances. We approached almost all the leading men of the various parties in the Assembly to put before us a constructive programme pitched as high as possible under the new Constitution but in the circumstances, as we were with our characteristic personal likes and dislikes, we could not do much. Notwithstanding this we tried our level best to do our bit and have not been behind vis-à-vis the Congress and other ministries elsewhere. We can claim that we have gone as far as the Congress ministries in the treatment of our political prisoners, externees and internees and the various political organisations, and in that very spirit the ministry raised the long-standing bans on the various organisations and against Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Allama-i-Mashriqi, and here I must add that no influence was used and no inspiration from high quarters came to us to take that line: We took the step voluntarily. We have not been told what else we could do under the peculiar circumstances of a Province like ours, with scanty resources, and dependent on a not-too-willing Centre for financial assistance. The acts and intentions of the ministry as announced from time to time in their programmes have no doubt come in for some criticism but I must remind the House that we cannot create or bring about a millennium as if by a magic wand overnight, and if we have to achieve anything we must look at things from a practical and realistic point of view. Perhaps there will be a time when we may remind our successors of this. Yet in spite of our financial handicaps we did our best to render real service to the people by trying to devise ways and means, and launching various constructive schemes to make the lot of the masses less hard. We hope and trust that the task initiated by us and left incomplete for want of opportunities will be taken up by

our successors and will bring lasting benefit to the countryside. While on this point, Sir, I cannot envy the lot of the incoming ministry who will most probably have to encounter the same difficulties, at least financial, which have been confronting us.

Sir, I and my colleagues will, as in honour bound, be tendering our resignation to His Excellency the Governor as the result of today's proceedings and I should like to take this early opportunity of extending to our successors whoever they may be a hearty welcome and of wishing them all success in their efforts to serve the real interests of the Province. I may be excused, Sir, if I were to strike a rather personal note at this moment. Throughout the rather lengthy period of my public life I have tried my hardest to serve the true interests of this land of my birth to the best of my lights. But, Sir, times change and with them come changes in the social, economic, political and even the religious views of the people. I tried to go abreast of the times and was occasionally criticised by some of my friends for going too fast, but I continued to do whatever I considered to be my duty and stuck throughout my career to the one aim of my life, namely, the educational and political advance of my homeland and the betterment of the condition of our people. Today, however, Sir, the world seems to be going on a breakneck speed and no wonder, therefore, if I feel the earth slipping from under my feet. In the field of politics I have been outpaced by the impatient youth and I feel that time has come for me to leave the field for young men and afford them an opportunity to prove what they are capable of doing by their impetuosity.

I had a great desire to see the Frontier people united and a strong entity in the India of the future. I have always been a believer in the principle that reforms must come from within and not from without. My conception of an autonomous province has been, and still is, a complete and self-contained administrative unit which should be really autonomous in the sense that its people should be entirely free to develop according to their own traditions and their genius. I for one cannot reconcile myself to the idea of taking my cue from people outside the Province and for that reason I wish that the organisation which is now to guide the destinies of this Province had been indigenous and of local growth—it is only my wish, Sir, and I do not want to impress it upon others—because then it would have had greater stability and closer affinity to the real needs of the people. But as is human destiny, Sir, my wishes did not come true. Times were when waves from the cool North swept over the country to the South thereby lending fresh vigour to the old and rather worn out culture and civilisation of India, but my friends would now have me believe that we must henceforth draw our inspiration from the torrid South which will, in its turn, send its monsoons of modern conceptions of social and economic values and of new tendencies towards the centralisation of authority, and a blending of cultures. The idea of running different autonomous units on stereotyped lines from one centre may be, and in fact is, an ingenious way of bringing about an apparent unity of heart and aim among diverse sections of a vast population but we of the older generations, Sir, brought up in different surroundings, believe that appearances are often deceptive and that

some semblance of real unity should be brought about among the units internally before they can be successfully conglomerated into a federation of the future. Unfortunately, no such sense of unity exists anywhere at present; our various cultures still dominate us and a single act of conversion of a girl can bring to surface our essential differences. Such petty incidents smash not only all ties of unity of aim and even the party discipline of a mighty organisation but set the whole countryside ablaze, as has been recently the case and devastated not only districts within settled areas but even vast tracts across the administered border. Far be it from me, Sir, to suggest that no attempts should be made to bridge the gulf between the communities and to make them more friendly towards each other. But I am afraid real unity which is the aim of every true son of India and which is not based on self-interests will take long to come. This is undoubtedly a delicate problem and in their light the present ministry tried to solve it by a pact which safeguarded the rights of the minorities without necessarily infringing the rights of the majority.

While extending my heartiest welcome to the incoming ministry let me express a hope that the ministry that will be formed under the able guidance of the distinguished guests who arrived here a few days ago will be a ministry which we will be able to look back upon with pride, a ministry that will be a stable one, and a ministry which will be pure and undiluted, so that it can command the confidence and respect of all the sections of this House and of the people outside it. Let me also express a hope that the great principles of the great organisation which they represent will not be compromised in this my small Province.

49. Ministerial Pay

A well-known educationist worker says in effect, "I hope you are not elated over the newspaper report that Congress ministers are going to pay themselves Rs.500 each per month with allowances for house and travelling amounting to Rs.300 extra. It is not enough that this scale is lower than the former. But that would be a wholly wrong way to look at the thing. The proper and only way to look at the thing is what proportion does the scale bear to the average income of this the poorest country in the world. What is the difference between the Secretary of the Congress and a minister? Your scale for the Vidyapith, for the A.I.S.A. and other institutions is Rs.75 as the highest. Why should a Vidyapith Professor, getting Rs.75, get Rs.500 per month on becoming a minister as he well might be. Then look at the Fergusson College. There too the Professors used to get no more than Rs.75 per month. And why should there be any difference between the pay of a Minister and his Secretary? These are all self-appointed. Have they any right to make these distinctions? I must confess that I do not understand this business. I can only hope that the report is baseless and that the Congress ministers in all the six provinces will show that they are real

representatives of the starving millions in whose name and for whose sake they are taking office. And why should they need cars? Why may they not walk to their work or use tramcars or buses? I have been to Japan. The Japanese scale is much lower than the reported scale. And Japan is an independent country much richer than ours. If we make of ministerial offices comfortable jobs for ourselves, it will be very much like working the Constitution at its very threshold. Now that you have begun to deal with such things in the columns of *Harijan* will you not give your opinion and arrest the course of the evil, assuming that there is truth in the report?"

This is the gist, as I recollect it, of a conversation. The speaker poured out his heart in sorrow and distress. I shared his sorrow. I share the hope that the newspaper report is not a correct forecast. It should be remembered that the Congress resolution fixes Rs.500 as the maximum. So far as I am aware it is inclusive of everything. A clear need for the maximum should be proved.

M.K.G.

50. *The Fundamental Difference*

It is necessary to contemplate for a moment the fundamental difference between the old and the new order. In order fully to realise it we must try to forget for the moment the crushing limitations of the Act. Seeing that the Congress has gone to the farthest limit and has accepted office, let every Congressman note the power it has taken. Whereas formerly the ministers were amenable to the control of the Governors, now they are under the control of the Congress. They are responsible to the Congress. They owe their status to the Congress. The Governors and the Civil Service, though irremovable, are yet answerable to the ministers. The ministers, however, have effective control over them, 'up to a point. That point enables them to consolidate the power of the Congress, i.e. the people. The ministers have the whip hand so long as they act within the four corners of the Act, no matter how distasteful their actions may be to the Governors. It will be found upon examination that so long as the people remain non-violent, the Congress ministers have enough freedom of action for national growth.

For effective use of this power, the people have to give hearty cooperation to the Congress and their ministers. If the latter do wrong or they neglect their duty it is open to any person to complain to the Secretary of the A.I.C.C. and seek redress. But none may take the law into his own hands.

Congressmen should also realise that there is no other political party in the field to question the authority of the Congress. For the other parties have never penetrated the villages. And that is not a work that can be done in a day. So far therefore as I can see, a vast opportunity is at the disposal of the Ministers in

terms of the Congress objective of complete Independence if only they are honest, selfless, industrious, vigilant and solicitous for the true welfare of the starving millions. No doubt there is great validity in the argument that the Act has left the ministers no money to spend for the nation-building departments. But this is largely an illusion. I believe with Sir Daniel Hamilton that labour, and not metal, is real money. Labour backed by paper is as good as, if not better than, paper backed by labour. Here are the sentiments of an English financier who has held high office in India: "The worst legacy we have left to India is a high-grade service." What has been done cannot be undone. I should now start something independent. Whatever is being done today with 'money motive' should in future be based on 'service motive'. Why should teachers and doctors be paid high salaries? Why cannot most of the work be done on a cooperative basis?

Why should you worry about capital when there are seven hundred million hands to toil? If things are done on a cooperative basis, which in other words is modified Socialism, money would not be needed, at least in large quantity. I find this verified in little Segaoon. The four hundred adults of Segaoon can easily put ten thousand rupees annually into their pockets if only they would work as I ask them. But they won't. They lack cooperation. They do not know the art of intelligent labour, they refuse to learn anything new. Untouchability blocks their way. If someone presented them with one lakh of rupees they would not turn it to account. They are not responsible for this state of affairs. We, the middle class, are. What is true of Segaoon is true of other villages. They will respond by patient effort as they are responding in Segaoon though ever so slowly. The State, however, can do much in this direction, without having to spend a single pie extra. The State officials can be utilised for serving the people instead of harassing them. The villagers may not be coerced into doing anything. They can be educated to do things which enrich them morally, mentally, physically and economically.

M.K. Gandhi

51. Preliminary List of Members of the Bihar Legislative Assembly, 1937

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

I. GENERAL CONSTITUENCIES

(i) Urban

| | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Babu Sarangdhar Sinha | 115-A, Exhibition Road, Patna | Patna City |
| 2. Babu Jagat Narayan Lal | P.O. Bankipore, Patna | Patna Division |

(Contd.)

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-------------------|---|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | Babu Vindhyswari Prasad Verma | Mahalla Darmuchak, P.O. Muzaffarpur | Tirhut Division |
| 4. | Babu Upendra Nath Mukharji | Station Road, Bhagalpur | Bhagalpur Division |
| 5. | Mr. Jimut Bahadur Sen | Indigo Factory Road, Purulia | Chhotanagpur Division |
| (ii) <i>Rural</i> | | | |
| 6. | Babu Indra Dewan Saran Singh | Village Dariapur, P.O. Phulwari (Patna) | Central Patna |
| 7. | Babu Shyam Nandan Sinha | Village Amahra, P.O. Bihta (Patna) | Dinapore |
| 8. | Babu Ladoo Sharma (alias) Sheel Bhadra Yajee | Bakhtarpur (Patna) | Barh |
| 9. | Babu Shyam Narayan Sinha | Village Bind, P.O. Amawan (Patna) | East Bihar |
| *10. | Babu Ram Prashad | Daryapur, P.O. Bankipore (Patna) | East Bihar |
| 11. | Babu Birendra Bahadur Sinha | Mahalla Maulaganj, P.O. Gaya (Gaya) | |
| *12. | Babu Sukhari Pasi | Village & P.O. Chakand (District Gaya) | South Gaya |
| 13. | Babu Anugrah Narayan Sinha | Vill. Poiawan, P.O. Aurangabad (District Gaya) | Aurangabad |
| 14. | Babu Jamuna Prasad Sinha | Village Reola, P.O. Sheotar (District Gaya) | Nawada |
| *15. | Babu Bundi Pasi | Village Mafi, P.O. Worselyganj (Gaya) | Nawada |
| 16. | Babu Jugal Kishore Narayan Sinha | Village Kachanawan, P.O. Mukhdumpur (Gaya) | North Gaya |
| 17. | Babu Hargobind Misra | Village Parsaunda, P.O. Mahuar (Shahabad) | Buxar |
| 18. | Pandit Gupteshwar Pandey | Village Ratwar, P.O. Mohania, Bhabua (Shahabad) | Bhabua |
| 19. | Babu Harinandan Singh | Village Majhawan, P.O. Naya Mohammadpur (Shahabad) | North-East Shahabad |
| 20. | Babu Budhan Rai | Village Chibilla, P.O. Akorhi (Shahabad) | East Central Shahabad |
| *21. | Babu Jagjivan Ram | Village Chandwa, P.O. Arrah, (Shahabad) | East Central Shahabad |

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-----------|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. | Babu Harihar Sinha | Village Dhansoin, P.O. Dhansoin (Shahabad) | Sasaram |
| 23. | Babu Biresh Dutt Sinha | Village Sirpal Basant, P.O. Basant (Saran) | West Saran Sadr |
| 24. | Babu Dwarkanath Tiwari | Village Bhairopur, P.O. Parsa (Saran) | East Saran Sadr |
| 25. | Babu Narayan Prashad Sinha | Village Goria Kothi, P.O. Goria Kothi (Saran) | North-East Siwan |
| 26. | Babu Shiveshwar Prashad Narayan Sinha Sharma | Village Chitali, P.O. Chainpur (Saran) | South-West Siwan |
| 27. | Babu Prabhunath Sinha | Village Sitabdiara (Sahebjada tolà) P.O. Sitabdiara (Saran) | East Gopalganj-cum- Mashrakh and Marhaura |
| 28. | Pandit Gobindpati Tiwari | Village Dularpur, P.O. Bethua Bazar (Saran) | West Gopalganj |
| *29. | Babu Rambasawan Rabidas | P.O. Gopalganj (Saran) | West Gopalganj |
| 30. | Babu Ganesh Prasad | P.O. Motihari (Champaran) | North-West Champaran Sadr |
| 31. | Babu Gorakh Prashad | Vakil, Motihari, P.O. Motihari (Champaran) | East Champaran Sadr |
| 32. | Babu Harbans Sahay | Village Bariaria, P.O. Sangrampur (Champaran) | South-West Champaran Sadr |
| 33. | Pandit Baidyanath Misra | Village Karmawa, P.O. Saugauli (Champaran) | South Bettiah |
| *34. | Babu Vishwanath Singh | Mahalla Ganj I, Bettiah, P.O. Bettiah (Chainparan) | North Bettiah |
| *35. | Babu Balgobind Bhagat | Mahalla Ujjaintola, P.O. Bettiah (Champaran) | North Bettiah |
| 36. | Babu Mahesh Prasad Sinha | Village Shekhpura, P.O. Jandaha (Muzaffarpur) | East Muzaffarpur Sadr |
| *37. | Babu Shivanandan Pasban | Village Mansoorpur Chamarna, P.O. Marwan (Muzaffarpur) | East Muzaffarpur Sadr |
| 38. | Babu Brijnandan Sahi | Village Baruraj, P.O. Baruraj (Muzaffarpur) | West Muzaffarpur Sadr |
| 39. | Babu Ramdayalu Sinha | Village Gangeya, alias Parmanandpur, P.O. Gangeya (Muzaffarpur) | East Sitamarhi-cum-Katra and Minpore |
| 40. | Babu Rameshwar Prashad Sinha | Village Jagannath Basant, P.O. Lalganj (Muzaffarpur) | South-West Hajipur |

(Contd.)

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-----------|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 41. | Babu Deep Narayan Sinha | Village Purantand, P.O. Pratapband (Muzaffarpur) | North-East Hajipur |
| 42. | Babu Ramnandan Sinha | Village Mahuaria, P.O. Sheohar (Muzaffarpur) | North Sitamarhi |
| 43. | Babu Ramashis Thakur | Mehsaul, Sitamarhi (Muzaffarpur) | West Sitamarhi |
| 44. | Babu Rajendra Narayan Chaudhuri | Village & P.O. Kherhar. Madhubani (Darbhanga) | North Madhubani |
| 45. | Babu Chaturanan Das | Village Bhachhi, P.O. Madhubani (Darbhanga) | South Madhubani |
| 46. | Babu Jamuna Karjee | Village Deopur, P.O. Pusa (Darbhanga) | East Madhubani-cum- Bahera |
| 47. | Babu Suryyanandan Thakur | Village Singhwara, P.O. Kansi Simri (Darbhanga) | Darbhanga Sadr |
| *48. | Babu Keshwar Pasban | Village Behta, P.O. Benepatti (Darbhanga) | Darbhanga Sadr |
| 49. | Babu Rajeshwar Prasad Narayan Sinha | Village & P.O. Birsinghpur, Samastipur (Darbhanga) | North-West Samastipur |
| 50. | Babu Ramcharan Sinha | Village Shekhopur, P.O. Nagarbasti (Darbhanga) | South-East Samastipur |
| *51. | Babu Sunder Pasi | Village Keota, P.O. Dalsingsarai (Darbhanga) | South-East Samastipur |
| 52. | Babu Sri Krishna Sinha | Village Maur, P.O. Barbigha (Monghyr) | South Sadr Monghyr |
| *53. | Dr. Raghuandan Prashad | Bindwara (Safiabad). P.O. Monghyr | South Sadr Monghyr |
| 54. | Babu Nirapada Mukharji | Fort, P.O. Monghyr (Monghyr) | North Sadr Monghyr |
| 55. | Babu Ramcharitra Singh | Village Maslandpur Bihat, P.O. Nurpur (Monghyr) | West Begusarai |
| 56. | Babu Brahmadeo Narayan | Village Sadanandpur, P.O. Lakhminia (Monghyr) | East Begusarai |
| 57. | Babu Kalika Prashad Singh | Village Mahuli, P.O. Gidhour (Monghyr) | Jamui |
| 58. | Babu Mewa Lal Jha | Village Kumaitha, P.O. Asarganj (Bhagalpur) | South Bhagalpur Sadr |
| 59. | Babu Shivadhari Sinha | Village Ganoul, P.O. Narayanpur (Bhagalpur) | North Bhagalpur Sadr-cum-Kishanganj |
| 60. | Babu Harkishore Prashad | Village Chandan, P.O. Chandan (Bhagalpur) | Banka |
| 61. | Babu Rajendra Misra | Village Sikrahitta, Tola Bhabanipur, P.O. Dagmara (Bhagalpur) | Supaul |
| 62. | Babu Shivanandan Prashad Mandal | P.O. Madhipura (Bhagalpur) | Madhipura |
| *63. | Babu Barsa Chamar | Village Belthu, P.O. Shah Kund (Bhagalpur) | Madhipura |

| S. No | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|----------|----------------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 64. | Babu Ramdin Tiwari | Mahalla Pokharbasti, P.O. Forbesganj (Purnea) | North-West Purnea |
| 65. | Babu Kishori Lal Kundu | Katihar, P.O. Katihar (Purnea) | East Purnea |
| 66. | Babu Dhecr Narayan Chand | Village Bishanpur Patti, P.O. Dhamdaha (Purnea) | South-West Purnea |
| *67. | Babu Jaglal Chaudhuri Pasi | Village Garkha, P.O. Garkha (Saran); Present address: Swaraj Ashram, Tikapatti, P.O. Tikapatti (Purnea) | South-West Purnea |
| 68. | Babu Binodanand Jha | Katra Bazar, P.O. Deoghar, Santal Parganas | Deoghar-cum-Jamtara |
| 69. | Babu Buddhinath Jha | Village Sanaur, P.O. Dhoreya (Santal Parganas) | Godda |
| 70. | Babu Bhagaban Chandra Das | Village Bolda, P.O. Rajmahal (Santal Parganas) | Santal Parganas Sadr |
| †71. | Babu Charan Murmu | Village Saharidhab, P.O. Tinphahar (Santal Parganas) | Santal Parganas Sadr |
| 72. | Shri Brijlal Dukania | Merchant, Pakur, Pakur | |
| †73. | Mr. Debu Murmu | Village Kaldah, P.O. Barhait Bungalow Raksi, Rajmahal (Santal Parganas) | Pakur-cum-Rajmahal |
| 74. | Babu Krishna Ballabh Sahay | Village Birinda, P.O. Tandwa (Hazaribagh) | Central Hazaribagh |
| †75. | Babu Hopna Santal | Village Karmatand, P.O. Gomian (Hazaribagh) | Central Hazaribagh |
| 76. | Babu Sukhlal Singh | Village Kosumha, P.O. Jori (Hazaribagh) | Giridih-cum-Chatra |
| *77. | Babu Karu Dusadh | Village Barhi, P.O. Barhi (Hazaribagh) | Giridih-cum-Chatra |
| 78. | Babu Deoki Nandan Prasad | Hatma Basti Road, Ranchi | Ranchi Sadr |
| †79. | Babu Ram Bhagat | Village Hirhi, P.O. Lohardaga (Ranchi) | Ranchi Sadr |
| 80. | Baralal Kandarp Nath Shah Deo | Village Palkot, P.O. Palkot (Ranchi) | Gumla-cum-Simdega |
| †81. | Mr. Boniface Lakra | Village Doba, P.O. Kuru (Ranchi) | Gumla-cum-Simdega |
| 82. | Babu Purna Chandra Mitra | Sarda Babu's Street, Ranchi | Khunti |
| 83. | Babu Rajkishore Singh | Babhandi, P.O. Hariharganj (Palamau) | North-East Palamau |
| *84. | Babu Jitu Ram Dusadh | Village Bansdih, P.O. Lesliganj (Palamau) | South-West Palamau |
| 85. | Babu Jadubans Sahay | Pleader, Jail Compound, Daltongaj | South-West Palamau |
| 86. | Babu Upendra Mohan Das Gupta | Indigo Factory Road, Purulia | South Manbhum |

(Contd.)

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-----------|---------------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| †87. | Babu Tika Ram Manjhi | Village Belmi, P.O. Topchanchi (Manbhumi) | South Manbhumi |
| 88. | Kumar Ajit Prashad Singh Deo | Village Kashipur, P.O. Panch Kote Raj (Manbhumi) | Central Manbhumi |
| *89. | Babu Gulu Dhopa | Village Mamurjore, P.O. Kushtaur (Manbhumi) | Central Manbhumi |
| 90. | Babu Ambika Charan Mallik | Advocate, P.O. Dhanbad (Manbhumi) | North Manbhumi |
| 91. | Babu Piaramtha Bhattacharji | Congress Office, Jamshedpur (Singhbhum) | Singhbhum |
| 92. | Babu Devendra Nath Samanta | Nimdhili, P.O. Chaibassa, (Singhbhum) | Singhbhum |
| †93. | Babu Ransika Ho | Village Khairpal, P.O. Majgaon (Singhbhum) | Singhbhum |

II. MUHAMMADAN CONSTITUENCIES

(I) Urban

| | | | |
|------|--|---|--|
| 94. | The Hon'ble Mr. Saiyid Abdul Aziz | P.O. Patna | Patna City |
| 95. | Maulavi Hafiz Zafar Hasan | Village Basarbigha, P.O. Sohsarai (Patna) | Patna Division |
| 96. | Maulavi Abdul Jalil | Mahalla Sarai, P.O. Laheria- sarai (Darbhanga) | Tirhut |
| 97. | Nawab Khan Bahadur Abdul Wahab Khan | Rattan House, Monghyr | Bhagalpur Division |
| 98. | Maulavi Saiyid Mohiuddin Ahmad | Dr. Fatehullah Lane, Ranchi | Chhotanagpur Division |
| 99. | Mr. Muhammad Yunus | Dak Bangalow Road, Patna | West Patna |
| 100. | Maulavi Sharfuddin Hasan | Mahalla Qazi, P.O. Barh (Patna) | East Patna |
| 101. | Mr. Saiyid Najmul Hasan | Gardiner Road, P.O. Patna (Patna) | East Gaya |
| 102. | Maulavi Muhammad Latifur | Village Baria, P.O. Madanpur (Gaya) | West Gaya |
| 103. | Chaudhuri Sharafat Husain | Chaudhuris' Quarters, Arrah | Shahabad |
| 104. | Dr. Syed Mahmood | Dahiawan, P.O. Chapra (Saran) | Saran Sadr, or North Champaran Sadr |
| 105. | Maulavi Muhammad Qasim | Mahalla Naibazar, P.O. Siwan (Saran) | Siwan |
| 106. | Khan Bahadur Saghirul Haque | P.O. Siwan (Saran) | Gopalganj |
| 107. | Maulavi Abdul Majid | Butchertoli, P.O. Motihari (Champaran) | South Champaran Sadr |
| 108. | Maulavi Shaikh Muhammad Sani | Khusitola, P.O. Bettiah (Champaran) | Bettiah |

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-----------|---|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 109. | Khan Sahib Muhammad Yakub | Village Kanta, P.O. Keotsa (Muzaffarpur) | Muzaffarpur Sadr |
| 110. | Maulavi Badrul Hasan | Mahalla Chandwara, Muzaffarpur | Hajipur |
| 111. | Mr. Tajamul Hussain Khan | Khaje Kalan, Patna, Patna City | Sitamarhi |
| 112. | Mr. Muhammad Shafi | P.O. Laheriasarai, Patna City | North-East Darbhanga |
| 113. | Maulavi Ahmad Ghaffoor | Village Sukki, P.O. Khajauli (Darbhanga) | North-West Darbhanga |
| 114. | Maulavi Sayeedul Haque | Village Chhatwan, P.O. Chhotaitapi (Darbhanga) | Central Darbhanga |
| 115. | Maulavi Muhammad Salim (alias Bhola Babu) | Village Bahgauni, P.O. Tajpur (Darbhanga) | South Darbhanga |
| 116. | Chaudhuri Mahammad Nazirul Hasan | Village Bakhtiarpur, P.O. Simri Bakhtiarpur (Monghyr) | North Monghyr |
| 117. | Maulavi Saiyid Rafiuddin Ahmad Rizvi | Dilawarpur, P.O. Monghyr (Monghyr) | South Monghyr |
| 118. | Mr. Muhammad Mahmud | P.O. Nadaul (Patna) | Bhagalpur Sadr-cum-Banka |
| 119. | Maulavi Saiyid Muhammad Minatullah | Betwan Bazar, Monghyr | Madhipura-cum-Supaul |
| 120. | Maulavi Shaikh Ziaur Rahman | Village Chandradai, P.O. Araria Rly. Stn. (Purnea) | Araria |
| 121. | Maulavi Zainuddin Hazan Mirza | Village Ruidhasa, P.O. Kishanganj (Purnea) | South Kishanganj |
| 122. | Maulavi Shaikh Fazlur Rahman | Village Dheshytoli, P.O. Mehurganj (Purnea) | North-West Kishanganj |
| 123. | Maulavi Muhammad Islamuddin | Village Lakhipur, P.O. Ramganj (Purnea) | North-East Kishanganj |
| 124. | Maulavi Shaikh Shafiqul Haque | Village Imadpur, P.O. Barsoeghat (Purnea) | South-East Purnea Sadr |
| 125. | Maulavi Muhammad Tahir | Village Dubaili Biswaspur, P.O. Bara Idgah (Purnea) | North Purnea Sadr |
| 126. | Mr. Saiyid Ali Manzar | Bank Road, P.O. Bankipore (Patna) | South Santal Parganas |
| 127. | Maulavi Abdul Bari | Doco, New Market, Patna City | North Santal Parganas |
| 128. | Maulavi Abdul Majid | Retired Deputy Magistrate, Hazaribagh | Hazaribagh |
| 129. | Maulavi Shaikh Ramzan Ali | Main Road, Ranchi | Ranchi-cum-Singhbhum |
| 130. | Maulavi Shaikh Muhammad Husain | Village Kosiara, P.O. Haider Nagar (Palamau) | Palamau |
| 131. | Qazi Muhammad Ilyas | Village Baro, P.O. Barauni (Monghyr) | Manbhumi |

(Contd.)

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

III. WOMEN'S CONSTITUENCIES**(i) General Urban**

132. Srimati Kamakhya Devi Nawal Ashram, Kadamkuan, Patna
Bankipore (Patna)
133. Srimati Sharda Kumari Devi Kishore Bhawan (Ghirni
Pokhar), Sarayaganj,
Muzaffarpur Muzaffarpur Town
134. Srimati Saraswati Devi Ward No. 5, P.O.
Hazaribagh (Hazaribagh) Bhagalpur Town

(ii) Muhammadan Urban

135. Lady Imam Mahalla Dhirapur,
P.O. Anisabad (Patna) Patna City

IV. ANGLO-INDIAN CONSTITUENCY

136. Mr. A.M. Hayman 7, Office Road, Jamshedpur Anglo-Indian
(Singhbhum)

V. EUROPEAN CONSTITUENCIES

137. Mr. E.C. Danby P.O. Dholi (Muzaffarpur) Patna and Tirhut-cum-Bhagalpur European
138. Mr. J. Richmond P.O. Sijua (Manbhumi) Chhotanagpur European

VI. INDIAN CHRISTIAN CONSTITUENCY

139. Mr. Ignes Beck Pathal Kudwa, Ranchi Indian Christian
(Ranchi)

VII. COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, MINING AND PLANTING CONSTITUENCIES

140. Babu Chakreshwar Kumar Devashram, Arrah The Bihar Chamber of
Jain (Shahabad) Commerce
141. Mr. W.H. Meyrick, O.B.E. P.O. Motihari The Bihar Planters'
(Champaran) Association
142. Mr. S.A. Roberts Chartered Bank Buildings, The Indian Mining
Calcutta Association
143. Mr. Munindra Nath Mukharji 17 Harish Mukharji Road, The Indian Mining
Calcutta Federation

| S. No. | Name of Member | Postal Address | Constituency |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

VIII. LANDHOLDERS' CONSTITUENCIES

| | | | |
|------|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 144. | The Hon'ble Sir Ganesh Dutta Singh | P.O. Patna | Patna Division Landholders |
| 145. | Babu Chandreshwar Prasad Narayan Sinha, C.I.E. | P.O. Sursand (Muzaffarpur) | Tirhut Division Landholders |
| 146. | Babu Surya Mohan Thakur | P.O. Barari (Bhagalpur) | Bhagalpur Division Landholders |
| 147. | Babu Rajkishore Nath Shah Deo | P.O. Ratu (Ranchi) | Chhotanagpur Division Landholders |

IX. LABOUR CONSTITUENCIES

| | | | |
|------|-------------------------------|---|--|
| 148. | Babu Natha Ram | Hindustani Line, Mohulbera, P.O. Jamshedpur (Singhbhum) | Jamshedpur Factory Labour |
| 149. | Babu Harendra Bahadur Chandra | Fraswer Road, Patna | Monghyr-cum-Jamalpur Factory Labour |
| 150. | Babu Khetra Nath Sen | P.O. Dhanbad (Manbhumi) | Hazaribagh Mining Labour |

X. UNIVERSITY CONSTITUENCY

| | | | |
|------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| 151. | Mr. Sachchidanand Sinha | Sinha Library Road, P.O. Patna | University |
| 152. | Noorul Hassan | | Saran Sadr |

*Elected to a seat reserved for members of the scheduled castes.

†Elected to a seat reserved for representatives of the backward tribes.

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